A NARRATIVE

OF THE

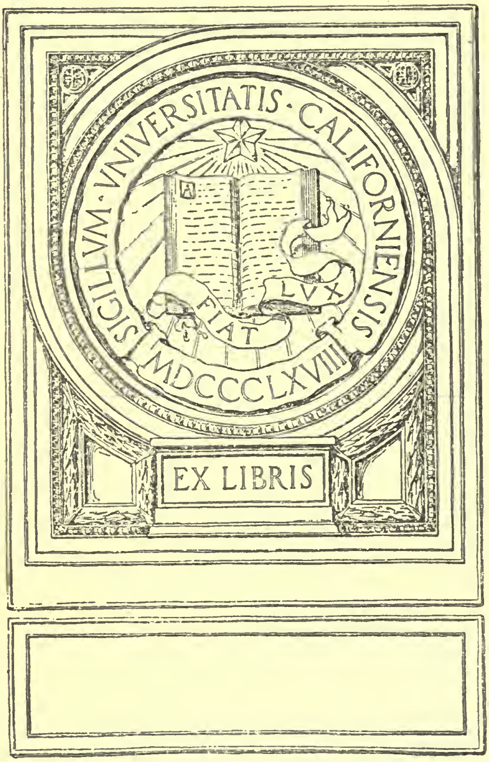
BOER WAR

[illegible]

YC 48113

Cw

10/6


SIGILLVM · VNIVERSITATIS · CALIFORNIENSIS
FIAT LVX
MDCCCLXVIII
EX LIBRIS

6823

A NARRATIVE OF THE BOER WAR.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/narrativeofboerw00cartrich

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

A NARRATIVE

OF

THE BOER WAR:

ITS CAUSES AND RESULTS.

BY

n.c
12 91

THOMAS FORTESCUE CARTER.

New Edition.

LONDON: JOHN MACQUEEN.
J. C. JUTA & CO.
CAPE TOWN, PORT ELIZABETH, AND JOHANNESBURG.
1896.

DT928
C3

C. R. R.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

PREFACE

In the following pages the author does not aim at supporting a policy called either Conservative or Liberal in connection with the Transvaal, and that circumstance in itself may be a sufficient one to justify the adverse criticism of adherents to either creed. In England, where party feeling runs high and penetrates to every recess, such an announcement as that prefixed is no doubt injudicious on the part of one who would enter the 'book market' with an eye to the business of the mart. Disclaiming, however, any other motive than that of an endeavour to give a truthful and impartial narrative of the affairs concerning the Transvaal, no further apology on my part is necessary for any facts related herein, nor is further explanation required of any inferences drawn from the facts.

It should be stated that, since the Narrative has been written, Lieutenant Hill of the 58th Regiment, and Dr. Mahon of the Naval Brigade, both of whom will be found mentioned in these pages, for having performed valiant services upon the battle-field, have received the much-coveted Victoria Cross 'For Valour.'

The Author.

Pietermaritzburg, 1882.

516357

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

CONTENTS.

PART I.

THE BRITISH IN THE TRANSVAAL.

CHAP. PAGE

I. INDIRECT CAUSES OF THE WAR, ... 1

II. THE ACT OF ANNEXATION, ... 26

III. DIRECT CAUSES OF THE WAR, ... 44

IV. THE INCEPTION OF THE STRUGGLE, ... 116

PART II.

THE BATTLE-FIELDS.

V. BRONKHURST SPRUIT ENGAGEMENT, ... 129

VI. THE INVASION OF NATAL. 147

VII. MARCH OF THE RELIEF COLUMN TO MOUNT PROSPECT, 156

VIII. THE BATTLE OF LAING'S NEK, ... 160

IX. PRESIDENT BRAND THE MEDIATOR—CAMP LIFE, . . 173

X. BOER PETITION OF RIGHTS, ... 180

XI. THE FIGHT ON INGOGO HEIGHTS, ... 196

XII. THE INCEPTION OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, . . . 229

XIII. THE BOER ADVANCE INTO NATAL—A RECONNAISSANCE, 232

XIV. THE GROWTH OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, ... 240

XV. MOUNT PROSPECT CAMP REINFORCED—A MORNING CALL IN THE TRANSVAAL—SKIRMISHING, ... 244

XVI. THE FIGHT ON THE MAJUBA—A FLIGHT FOR LIFE, . 253

XVII. BURYING THE DEAD—AN INTERVIEW WITH JOUBERT—THE GENERAL'S FUNERAL, ... 304

XVIII. SIR EVELYN WOOD IN COMMAND—CONTEMPORARY EVENTS IN THE FREE STATE AND CAPE COLONY, . 316

PART III.

THE PEACE.

CHAP.		PAGE
XIX.	A LONG ARMISTICE AND ITS RESULT, ...	324
XX.	LAING'S NEK DESERTED, ...	338

PART IV.

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE TRANSVAAL.

XXI.	THE SIEGE OF STANDERTON, ...	341
XXII.	A VISIT TO HEIDELBERG, ...	356
XXIII.	THE SIEGE OF PRETORIA, ...	365
XXIV.	THE SIEGE OF POTCHEFSTROM, ...	389
XXV.	THE SIEGE OF LEYDENBURG, ...	432
XXVI.	MARABASTADT AND RUSTENBURG—THE HOSTILITY OF THE NATIVES, ...	438
XXVII.	THE SIEGE OF WAKKERSTROOM — THE SEIZURE OF UTRECHT AND MIDDLEBURG, ...	445
XXVIII.	TREKKING SOUTH—THE FIRST MEETING OF THE BOER VOLKSRAAD—WAITING FOR THE ROYAL COMMISSION,	460
XXIX.	THE ROYAL COMMISSION—ITS FUNCTIONS AND POWERS —MR. GLADSTONE AND THE MALCONTENTS, . .	482
XXX.	THE CONVENTION, ...	522
XXXI.	THE VOLKSRAAD AND ITS VERDICT — CONCLUSION— POSTSCRIPT, ...	534

PART I.

THE BRITISH IN THE TRANSVAAL.

CHAPTER I.

INDIRECT CAUSES OF THE WAR.

THE circumstances which impelled the Boers of the Transvaal to fight for independence in the years 1880 and 1881 were many; yet it is not a difficult matter to sum up the causes which urged this handful of uncultured farmers to engage in the desperate task of throwing off the to them hateful British yoke. There can be little doubt that an outbreak of hostilities was precipitated by one flagrant act of injustice on the part of the Government at Pretoria, and that at a time when the suspicion first entered the minds of well-informed and thoughtful men in the country that the Boers meant to carry out their threat to fight for their liberty, failing all attempts by agitation to regain their independence. The flagrant act of injustice I have alluded to, I will detail later on, when giving an account of the 'Bezhuidenot' affair. How these descendants of the Dutch Calvinists and Huguenots of the seventeenth century succeeded in the field, armed only with rifles, against the trained and disciplined troops of England, beyond all expectation, and so gained for themselves and their cause that attention which their voices had never been able to command, will be read in history with wonder. I might say also that their success in arms won for them that small measure of independence which they enjoy to-day; for it must remain an incontrovertible fact, that had the Boers not been successful in battle, the Transvaal at this hour would be under the British flag still. Let us suppose for a moment that the Potchefstrom garrison had been strong enough to beat off its assailants at the outset, and had done so; or that the affair at Bronkhurst Spruit had resulted in the defeat of the Boers, and that reinforcements from Natal had entered the Transvaal prior to the occupation of Laing's Nek by the enemy, will any man venture to say that the result of the outbreak would have been the abandonment of the Transvaal to the Dutch farmers? By their determination and success in the field against the British, the inhabitants of the new State gained their independence,—force of arms, not force of oratory or the righteousness of their cause, has given them half that they wished for; because the Imperial Government would never have listened to the story of Boer wrongs, it would never have discovered that there was any righteousness in their cause unless the sordid question of pounds, shillings, and pence necessary to subjugate and hold in subjection this people had gained for them a hearing, and carried conviction in a quarter where pounds, shillings, and pence are held in no light esteem.

To write an account of the invasion of Natal and the war in the Transvaal cannot be a pleasant task for an Englishman (if the plain, unvarnished truth is related), for the reason that it must be a record in which defeat of and disaster to his own countrymen predominates,—a record of defeat and disaster relieved only to a very slight extent by instances in which the British held their own against an enemy who had been the subject more of British contempt than British admiration.

If, three months before the first shot was fired, anyone ventured the opinion that the Boers would fight, that man would be regarded as something worse than a simpleton. I am speaking now of Natal, the Cape Colony, and the Free State, countries adjacent to the Transvaal, where naturally men claim to have a more intimate knowledge of Boer proclivities and intentions than do those who reside at a greater distance from South-East Africa. It was thought that the Boers had let the annexation pass too quietly, and that they had refrained too long from active resistance to British authority to determine to fight in the year 1880. As proof that the Boers would not take up arms, the fact was freely pointed out that they talked too much ever to come to that conclusion, and that their efforts to regain their independence would never go further than protests, petitions, and resolutions passed at mass meetings or gatherings of the people. Again, it was thought that the rapid increase in the British civilian element since the annexation would act as a deterrent to any scheme for rebellion that the Boers might project; add to this the circumstance that few people in Natal, the Free State, or the Cape Colony, really knew the feeling of the descendants of the Voortrekkers, that their troubles were a matter of indifference, even if known to their neighbours, and that the mass meetings, the protests, and the resolutions passed by the Transvaal Boers were supposed to be the outcome of the work of a few agitators, and it is easy to account for the mistaken notions long entertained by residents immediately outside the Transvaal. Inside the State, with only one journal identified with the Boer cause, with a scattered population of malcontents for the most part living miles away from any centre of population, a malcontent population not given to ventilating its grievances in the press, for the simple reason that writing is amongst that people an art next to unknown, it is not to be wondered at that a very poor idea of the feeling of 'the farmers' prevailed amongst those who were identified with commerce in the towns, and that the English residents pooh-poohed —as Englishmen invariably do pooh-pooh, often to their cost—the humble efforts and schemes of those they regarded as their inferiors. Bound up in their business and the strife of accumulating wealth—that strife is as ardent in South Africa as it is in any part of the world, probably a shade more intense than in Europe—the Transvaal merchants, traders, and storekeepers remained to the eleventh hour blind to the true state of affairs around them. That fault, if it is a fault, they have paid for dearly. But the chief offender in this respect was undoubtedly the Government, at the head of which Sir Owen Lanyon presided. If the merchants thought it was their business to look after their own business, well and good,—trade, and not the cares of others, was their chief concern and their chief object in coming to the Transvaal. As long as the Boers remained in the country and the inflow of inhabitants continued, as long as there was in their minds no fear of the Boers regaining possession of the territory, it did not concern the merchants to bother about the rights or wrongs of the Boers—any more than that consideration troubled the Imperial Government—whilst a Government on the spot, charged with the duty of having an eye to the interests of every class of people in the Transvaal, was present at Pretoria. That that Government at Pretoria signally failed in its business it will be my duty to attempt to demonstrate, and that will be one of the causes I shall assign for the Boer war.

That the colonial possessions of England have outgrown in extent the limit which the mind of statesmen at home can comprehensively grasp and beneficially control, is the cause undoubtedly of the growth of a republican spirit in the colonies, which has as yet found only a limited expression in the public press, but which exists to an extent probably not contemplated by people in England; and that republican spirit, the outcome of dissatisfaction with the controlling power of the mother country, will assuredly prove, before many years have passed, as fatal to the controlling power, if Imperial policy towards Crown or semi-Crown colonies is not speedily remodelled, as the growth of republicanism in the United States proved fatal to the jurisdiction of England in that quarter of the globe. The circumstance of an Englishman being elbowed out of the land of his birth and having to gain a livelihood in one of the colonies, does not in the remotest degree stifle in him the aspiration for 'popular' government which is inborn in every Briton. The settler in any one of our colonies seldom dwells in the country of his choice more than four or five years without discovering—if it is what is known as a Crown colony, or one which has not a responsible government of its own—that whilst there are certain advantages gained by the intimacy of connection with the mother country, those advantages are more than counterbalanced in the longrun by the absence of practical knowledge of the necessities of the colony on the part of those who endeavour, however honestly, to govern it from a distance. The colonist not unfrequently finds that he is the sport of parties at home, either Conservative or Liberal, as party exigencies serve; and though he may have left England the most ardent Conservative or Liberal, he is soon convinced that neither the principles of Liberalism nor Conservatism are of any practical value to the land of his adoption. He discovers that it is as much the custom of the Conservative Ministry as it is of a Liberal Ministry to ignore the wants and to frustrate the schemes of progress which form the subject of the colonist's appeal to the home Government, that wilful blindness and wilful deafness, wilful misconstruction and wilful misunderstanding, on the part of that Government seem to be the leading lines of colonial policy; and that in the Crown there is no court of appeal, no avenue towards redress, no prospect of a reversal of the inferior authority, no attentive ear for grievances so palpable that they should not require stating. The colonist, therefore, whose destinies are ruled and whose life and good government depend upon that distant authority known as the Crown and the Cabinet, becomes imbued with a republican spirit, for it is not in the nature of man that he can identify himself with parties which are of no practical benefit to him in his sphere of labour. As an instance I might cite the Zulu war and the Zulu settlement: the Conservatives were applauded for their determination to break the power of Cetewayo; but colonial applause gave place to jeers as soon as the ineffectual nature of the settlement became known, and that the cost of that war and that settlement in which colonists had had no voice was, in part, to be defrayed by the colony of Natal and the Transvaal.

Any shadow of participation in that event, save the spending of blood and money, was denied Natal and the Transvaal; colonial opinion and experience were declined without thanks, rather derided as worse than valueless. In the result it is seen that there is something more than a probability of Zululand requiring a second process of settlement, and that at no distant date. That is the act of a Conservative Government; to-day a Liberal Government contemplates the release of those men imprisoned by their predecessors. The release, indeed, will not be due to any advice from a quarter which will be most affected by the liberty of those chiefs, but to the advice of a section of the party in power, and will be made as a protest against and recorded as evidence condemnatory of the misdeeds of those in opposition. Each successive Government must have a colonial policy of some description: the policy of the one will differ from that of the other; but there is ever accord between Liberal and Conservative on the broad ground of ignoring the opinions and desires of those governed by their policy. Only indirectly, and as a rule very indifferently at that, represented in Parliament, colonies ruled by the Crown have no chance of being heard, unless, perchance, their contentions on any given subject will furnish valuable material for the arguments of a Liberal against Conservative theories, or *vice versa.* I have mentioned the Zulu affair as an instance encouraging European settlers in South-East Africa to cast off any allegiance to party in England, but instances could be multiplied. As for the general interest with which the colonies are regarded at home, England takes as much interest in Natal and the Transvaal—when war does not attract attention—as

France or Russia does, and perhaps no more. The rule of these colonies by either of those foreign countries would, therefore, in all probability, be as wise and beneficial as that of England. If no particular benefit is derived from one national Government, that Government speedily falls into contempt by the subject. If there is such a growth of republican feeling amongst colonial settlers, it is not difficult to imagine how widespread, nay universal, is that feeling amongst their children—those who, born in the colony, have little or nothing to bind them to England, who know little about it, and whose ears are daily filled with local grievances, the outcome of Imperial rule. The Imperial Government, I have remarked, appears to have, in regard to her colonies, no particular policy, no plan or system, no broad line of action save that of running counter to the will of the European inhabitants of those dependencies under the Imperial thumb. This policy has claimed for it the advantage of a corrective and chastening influence. Up to a certain point, administered in moderate doses, the restraining influence is beneficial, but the quantity has long since become an unwholesome one.

One further exception is to be noted as regards England having no colonial policy, and, as far as Natal is concerned, it is a notorious one; it is that policy having for its aim to 'protect' the black man, to encourage him in idleness and vice, to pet and spoil him, to stimulate him to rebellion, and then, having made him an insufferable nuisance to himself, and a terror to everyone around him, having educated him up to the point of danger which is unbearable, to slaughter him to a sufficient degree to make him tractable for a time. That, at all events, has been Imperial policy as regards Natal and the Transvaal, and the only foundation or cause for this policy is the all-pervading and essentially insular English notion that when a man leaves the shores of England, his nature undergoes a complete change; that he loses all sense of humanity and justice towards his inferiors; that arrogance, bloodthirstiness, and cruelty take the place of those better feelings; and that his all-absorbing passion thenceforth is to wreak vengeance for imaginary wrongs on any black-skinned individual who comes across his path. Nothing could be farther from the mark; I speak as regards Natal after two years' residence in the country, and coming from England imbued with the orthodox Exeter Hall spirit and belief.

As regards the native population in this colony, I assert, without fear of contradiction, that the Englishman behaves towards the native servant with no more arrogance than do nineteen out of every twenty Englishmen at home conduct themselves to their white servants; and as regards oppression and severity, it is shown in no more marked degree than in the Englishman in England to his employee.

It would seem that the very first principle of colonial direction by England was that of courting ignorance of the country that is to be governed; and that done, every consequent mistake comes instinctively. I allude to the regulation respecting Her Majesty's representatives for her colonies, which enjoins a residence covering a period sufficient for a governor to become acquainted with the wants of a country, and as soon as he has, so to speak, served his apprenticeship, and is equal to the work by experience and observation, promptly to remove him to go through another apprenticeship somewhere else, and to make room for a new apprentice in the place he has served his time in. This everlasting chopping and changing is probably at the root of the evil of colonial maladministration. The practice suggests a constant experimentalizing; each new governor having naturally his own particular pet scheme, each governor anxious to do his best and better than his predecessor—that is to say, better in the eyes of his employers, not in the eyes or interests, necessarily, of the inhabitants of the country. From them he has nothing to gain; their approbation he is not dependent on, and their censure he can afford to treat with contempt. Unless imbued with a high moral sense of duty, which is not more common to administrators and governors than to any other class of men, he can ignore local necessities and feeling, if even he has discovered what these are, and follow the programme which he knows to be rather consonant with the ideas of Her Majesty's Ministers. This is looking at the question from a very low moral standpoint as regards the servants of the Queen, but history forces the fact into prominence.

What connection has this argument with the Boer war for independence? This: that the Transvaal Boers have seen in Natal what the government of a practically Crown colony is. They have noted that with even a local representative assembly, Englishmen in Natal have agitated for responsible government, and have groaned under the rule of Downing Street; and the desire of Natal for independence has taught the Boers a lesson which, in truth, they hardly needed, but which has doubtless had due weight with them. If in Natal, where the white population is essentially English, there was a desire for freedom from Imperial rule, there must be something obnoxious and undesirable in the same rule for the Transvaal. This inference duly drawn by the Boers I put forward as again one of the causes of their resort to arms to win their independence.

If it is true that the system of the appointment of colonial governors for comparatively short periods is one that has many disadvantages; if six successive governors or administrators, during a period of say thirty years, are less likely to give, collectively, during their periods of office as much satisfaction to the people, and are less likely to work out a beneficial policy to meet the wants and necessities of the country, than would two or even three administrators whose residence covered the same space of time, how much more forcible is the argument that in the state of the Transvaal directly after the annexation, the system of constantly changing the administrative officer was pernicious to the highest degree! Nothing devised could be more unfortunate and directly provocative of dissatisfaction than that policy, or rather the creation of a political agent one day for the purpose of undoing him the next. Between 1876 and 1880, five of Her Majesty's representatives had a hand in the government of the Transvaal: first Sir Theophilus Shepstone; second and third, Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Owen Lanyon; fourth, Sir Garnet Wolseley; fifth, Sir George Pomeroy Colley.

Later on, I propose to allude at some length to the parts which severally these gentlemen played in relation to the country. Here I will not do more than point out briefly the results of experimenting with men on men in this way. The appearance of Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Owen Lanyon on the scene as successors to Sir Theophilus Shepstone led the disaffected Boers to believe that there was prevalent in the mind of the English Government a suspicion that the Transvaal had not turned out, or even bid fair to turn out, such a valuable acquisition to the British Empire as was at first expected it would prove, and that its beneficial government under the British flag was a matter of considerable difficulty: this was in itself sufficient to raise the hopes of the disaffected malcontent section, and to make them take heart again. It endued them with new life, and was eminently calculated to encourage a belief that England was at all events about to take a new departure in the manner of the government of the country. Directly after Sir Bartle Frere had surveyed the land, and had proved to those who were agitating for the cancellation of the act of annexation that they had nothing to hope in that direction from his advent, and immediately after Sir Owen (at that time Colonel) Lanyon had, in conjunction with his chief, set about concerting measures for the government of the territory, Sir Bartle Frere retired from the scene; and with his disappearance came practically a limit to Sir Owen Lanyon's policy, since Sir Garnet Wolseley, the new High Commissioner, took everything on his own shoulders, and Sir Owen Lanyon had in all matters only to receive and carry out the instructions of his superior. Sir Garnet Wolseley's first intimation to Colonel Lanyon at this juncture is worth reproducing. It is as follows:—

'PIETERMARITZBURG, *Sunday*, *June* 29.

'I am now High Commissioner for South-Eastern Africa, therefore in future send all reports to me under flying seal to General Clifford, Maritzburg. I have full powers to make peace without reference to England. I write to you by post to-day. Meanwhile, undertake no offensive operations of any kind against Secocoeni. Endeavour to protect life and property on your frontier. Raise no more men except what are required for police and strictly defensive purposes. I do not approve of the present very extensive weekly expenditure. Please check and restrict it in all possible ways, and do not embark in any new plans entailing large outlay of public money. Desire paymaster to report at once, in writing, the payments he has already made, giving all possible details as to objects of expenditure, and report to me fully, yourself, on the subject. In future you will please take orders only from me.'

The disaffected Boers naturally enough concluded at first that Sir Garnet's appointment meant the inauguration of a new era. Imperfectly acquainted as the majority of them were with the feeling of public opinion in England as to Lord Chelmsford's conduct of military operations in Zululand, they may be excused if they thought in their own minds that the primary cause of Sir Garnet Wolseley's appointment was to follow a different line of action in the Transvaal to that proposed by Sir Bartle Frere. Sir Garnet Wolseley did follow a different line to Sir Bartle Frere as soon as he could give his immediate attention to the Transvaal; and if the people were disappointed in Sir Bartle Frere, they were disagreeably disappointed in Sir Garnet Wolseley. The change, nevertheless, must have been received as further evidence of mental vacillation in England as regarded her new possession. The policy of the hero of Ashantee was the culminating stroke to their backs, although fresh evidence was forthcoming of experimenting with administrators for the country in the appointment of Sir George Colley in 1880, Sir Owen Lanyon, however, being still retained at Pretoria. If this display of a procession of administrators for the Transvaal represented to the Boer mind wavering and indecision, uneasiness and dissatisfaction, of English Ministers with the business as transacted in the Transvaal,—and that would be the light in which agitators would choose, and not unreasonably, to view the affair,—it is certain that it was very injurious to the reputation of every man who played his brief part in that procession, because they never had an opportunity, owing to want of time, of carrying out the policy—whether good or bad—of which they propounded the first principles. Equally injurious was it to the country itself, leaving the malcontent Boers out of the question, because under the circumstances no serious legislation could be undertaken or reforms effected. A country disposed to be unsettled was periodically being shaken up and kept in a state of excitement, when the only cure for its complaint was as much rest and quietness as was compatible with the inauguration of progressive and beneficial measures for its rule. The procession of administrators will be allowed, I think, to rank amongst the causes of the Boer war as a good one in the secondary list.

In the primary list should rank foremost the thorough want of sympathy, in mode of life, manners, religion, social customs, habits, aspirations, and thought, between Englishmen and the Transvaal Boers—I say the Transvaal Boers, because they must really be considered a distinct people from the Dutchmen who have settled in the Cape (or Old Colony, as it is called in South-East Africa), distinct from the Boers in the Orange Free State, and distinct from the majority of the Dutch who are content to remain in Natal. The Transvaal Boers are recruited largely from that section of Dutch settlers in South Africa who have always, and probably will for ages to come, resent as an intrusion the presence of Englishmen in their midst; very much in the same way that certain of our countrymen have an aversion to the heathen Chinee, the Transvaal Boer has an aversion to the Britisher.

The Britisher, ever since one Dutchman set foot in this country, has been following him up, 'always a-chevying,' as poor Joe complained, elbowing him out steadily but surely. The Englishman has become in a manner the natural foe of the Boer, and the true Boer will, for many a long year to come, look at the Englishman askance. When the Englishman has not been fighting with the Boer, he has been on his trail with a wagon-load of goods, family Bibles, and Manchester stuffs; and I do not know whether it arises from the fact that commercial morality has never been lower amongst the traders than it is at the present day, but it has come to pass, by some means or other, that the Boer regards the British trader in not so fair a light as the British trader regards himself. Whether it is a gun, a family Bible, Schiedam, cotton stuffs, or a new Constitution we offer the Boer, either out of our commercial love for him or out of our sheer philanthropy, the Boer mistrusts us. He will buy from us because we have the only market available to him, and he will sell to us because we are the only present available purchasers; but he has not a scintilla of respect for us, or the remotest wish to be more intimate with us. An Africander, *i.e.* one born in South Africa, if he can speak Dutch, is less an object of aversion to the Boer; but even the Africander is not constituted exactly to the Boer mind, for the simple reason that he is not a Boer, and that his ways can never be their ways. In the Transvaal now there are many Old Colony Boers, but they appear to be quite distinct from the Transvaal Boer; they move in their own 'set,' and to a large extent their ideas are different to those of their neighbours. Amongst 'the Old Colony Boers,' as they like to be called, is to be found a very considerable section of the people styled during the late disturbance 'loyal Boers.' This class of inhabitants of the Transvaal have, I believe, emigrated from the Cape, not so much on account of seeking congenial neighbours in the new country, or because a Boer republic offered attractions which the British Government did not afford them, but because the Transvaal provided a better field, and a cheaper and wider field, for their pastoral and agricultural pursuits than the Old Colony. The leaders of the Boers of the Transvaal are conscious of the inferiority, socially and intellectually, of the people they guide compared with the Boers of the Old Colony and the Free State; but they claim to be able to bring the Transvaal farmers up to the level of, if not to overtake, those with whom they at present will not bear favourable comparison. Education and enlightenment will, however, have to make large and rapid strides if this pleasant picture is to be witnessed by the next generation.

The mind of the Boer is simplicity itself from an English point of view, and his religion and habits will bear the same remark—more particularly his religion, in this age when the consuming of composite candles, the wearing of gorgeous raiment, special attitudes, promenadings, and special outward signs are considered, with other formulæ, indispensable if a man would go to heaven. The Boer, however simple he may be, would not scorn education except in such matters as these; he would not even scorn this religious education, but he would regard it as the veriest machinery of Satan himself. That is a point the Boer will never be educated up to; for the Lowest Churchman in England to-day would make a Boer blush to the roots of his hair, were the Boer to witness a Low Church service. You may take it, then, that the Boer is a primitively Low Churchman amongst Low Churchmen and Primitives. I don't introduce this statement for the sake of dealing a slap through the Boer at the Englishman, or to demonstrate the superiority of the one over the other, because I do not know who is entitled to the palm; but with the Dutch farmer religion is, it is currently reported, a most important thought, a consideration far before any other, as it ought to be with every other nation. If there is one thing the Boer prides himself on, it is his godliness, or his prayers for it, and I need not point out that there is a wide gulf in this respect between Boers and English.

In his habits and mode of life he is a stranger to us. He likes to be out of the sight of his neighbour's smoke; to live fifteen or twenty miles from any other man's dwelling is a source of satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction to him. The want of company—which such a physical difficulty as this presents to companionship—is obviated by the patriarchal customs of the people. When a Boer settles down, and as soon as his children grow up and marry, they build their houses within a short distance of the original family mansion, generally a gunshot or two away; and so prolific are this people, that a village or hamlet is not long in forming, each house having its small garden and each family its own wide expanse of unenclosed grazing land, from 500 up to 10,000 acres, according to the means of the owner. To be well removed from a main road is an advantage in Natal no less than the Transvaal if a man is a farmer. Proximity to the road means a greater liability to the introduction of disease into your flocks by mixing with infected animals turned loose to graze at resting-places by those journeying on the highway. In a country like South Africa, where pleuro-pneumonia, under the name of lung sickness, carries off sometimes the whole of a man's stock,—a disease which no attempt worth speaking of is made to prevent spreading,—it is an important consideration to be away from the road. Boer houses, whenever possible, are therefore situated well off the track of transport wagons, and the isolation of the people is complete. They see no one travelling in their districts unless the traveller happens to be a friend, and goes out of his way to make a call; they hear nothing of the news of the outer world, nor do they read of it, as newspapers are seldom seen by them. Coffee-drinking and shooting are their chief recreations; the latter, however, comes almost within the sphere of duty, as it is much cheaper for a Boer to kill a buck and use it for food, than to kill a sheep or an ox to supply his wants, as it is seldom he has to fire twice to load up his horse with game. They are deer-stalkers from infancy, and the Duke of Cambridge never made a truer remark than that in the recent war we had been fighting an army of deer-stalkers; he might have added, deer-stalkers second to none in the dexterity with which they use the rifle. The dress of the Boer is of the roughest material, suited to his occupation. Corduroy and flannel for the body, a soft felt hat for the head, and soft leather-soled boots suited to walking on the grass, complete his simple ordinary attire, and oftentimes it is none of the cleanest. The clothing sometimes never comes off his body till it drops off through old age, not of the man, but of the material. Those who are attentive to 'Naachtmaal' gatherings have of course a suit of best clothes, which periodically do duty on great occasions, and this suit is irreproachable in every respect but the fitting. It never fits the wearer, and the wearer never seems to fit his best suit. At no time does a Boer look so ungainly—and he is about as graceful in his movements as a dromedary—as when 'got up' for Naachtmaal.

If I were to point out now one-half the peculiarities which strike a stranger as distinguishing the Boer from the Englishman, the reader would lose the train of thought I am attempting to follow—the causes of the war. Besides, I think it is not necessary, seeing how often Boer habits, manners, and customs have been described by able writers, for me to dilate on the characteristics of this people to prove the great dissimilarity between their ways and our ways. If a dissimilarity in religion, thoughts, mode of life, tastes, and ideas,—if there is nothing in common between Boers and English, then their aversion to us is comprehensible, and their attempts to keep us at arm's length in spite of our wish to be intimate with them, even to the extent of taking their country and governing it for them, easily understood. To the Boers we shall always be the 'verdoomdt Englischman.' That is their description of us. It is not a parliamentary term; it means 'damned Englishman.' The religious Boer uses the expression freely, without doing the slightest violence to his conscience or with any misgiving in his mind, because in uttering it he believes he is uttering the truth. Our condemnation as a race being then assured,—we being disciples of Beelzebub according to the Boer creed,—Boer disinclination to have anything whatever to do with us is easily understood when we remember that the Boer esteems himself a saint, and as such he would not have his sanctity soiled by contact with the children of darkness.

It has been advanced as one reason for the Boers taking up arms, that they were continually taunted by their fellow-countrymen in the Cape Colony and the Free State with having surrendered their liberty without striking a blow for it. It may be so, but I have not noticed in the press of either country even the tone of a sneer of that nature. The Transvaal farmers have been repeatedly, since the annexation, urged by a section of the press of not only the Cape Colony and the Free State, but of Natal, to have recourse to arms; but if they have been jeered at publicly, I have not seen the exasperating references to 'Dutch courage' by those who were identified with them in convictions. A feeling undoubtedly did prevail, and it increased rapidly from the time of the annexation to within a short period of the outbreak of hostilities, that the grandchildren of the old Voortrekkers had lost the warlike spirit of their grandsires. The reverse of the Boers at Boomplatz and their failure to subdue Secocoeni, were regarded as evidence of the truth of this argument, raised, I think, principally by colonists of English extraction rather than by Dutchmen outside the Transvaal, although no one who knew the Boers ever doubted that their skill with the rifle was in the least impaired. The Boers indignantly deny that they were beaten by Secocoeni, but it is difficult for any impartial person to discover any other element than that of failure in their campaign against that chief. If the

Boers succeeded in their operations against him, then so did Colonel Rowlands succeed in his expedition—an expedition which the British say was a failure, but one owing more to want of the necessary troops than the necessary courage. I do not believe that any verbal 'chaff' that may have been directed at the Boers for their abstention from armed resistance to the act of the annexation, had much weight with them in the scale for peace or war. The only evidence I personally had of the Boers feeling aggrieved at remarks derogatory to their courage, was when on the summit of Majuba one of their number asked, 'Now do you English say we are cowards?' He did not inquire, 'Who can say we are cowards now?' but, 'Do you *English*?' The inference is, then, that if they had been taunted, the taunt came from Englishmen in ill-natured moments; and I can quite understand, knowing that the Englishman is apt to 'take a rise' out of a man of another nationality whom he considers to be more or less of a simpleton, that the guilt, if any, does lie with us. The retort courteous of a Boer on the 27th February 1881, made where it was and with such surroundings, should be a lesson for Englishmen to take to heart for the future. But it is not well to lay too much stress on this point as one of the incentives to the Boers to fight, because it is difficult to determine the extent to which irritating remarks were passed. If on our side there was contempt for the Boers, they on their part lost no opportunity of displaying their rancour and expressing their low opinion of us. Most of this kind of feeling would be demonstrated on the occasion of a squabble between individuals. With the Englishman it was the natural result in angry moments of a desire to say the most disagreeable thing to an opponent; with the Boer it was the outcome of the same desire: on both sides it was perfect reciprocity.

If there is one reason more than another that makes British rule distasteful and execrable to the Boers of the Transvaal, it is the divergence of opinion which marks our estimate of a man with a black skin from their estimate of him. This is a fundamental grievance, and one that is not confined only to the Transvaal Boers. It is their inexorable, immutable resolution and faith, that there can be no equality of coloured persons with them, either in Church or State. The contempt the Boer has for the Kaffir, the length to which he will descend to prove that feeling, is one of the worst traits in Boer character. He will have nothing to do with the Kaffir beyond getting all he can out of him, either in the shape of service or gifts: there the connection ends; no return in the way of raising the mind of the Kaffir, or revealing to him the privileges which they themselves obtain from the ponderous family Bible, can be made by the Boer. They are truly a conservative race: what they themselves are they are content they should remain, and that their children should be no better and no worse than they are; and this conservative principle they apply to the blacks. What God made them they must remain—hewers of wood and drawers of water, the servant of the white man. The British, believing that Boerish ideas of God's providence are somewhat crude, rather go to the opposite extreme. The black man of South Africa is so much the object of our tender solicitude, that our extreme tenderness for his welfare is almost as ruinous to him as might be the unchecked contempt and indifference of the Boer: a beneficial equipose would be found midway between the two lines of action. We approach the Kaffir with a missionary in one hand and a code of laws in the other, which legalizes what in ourselves would be a crime. We too are conservative in this matter in our own way. Because our fathers thought it a sin that a man should have more than one wife at a time, we now think bigamy is a sin in a white man; because the Kaffir father did not think it a sin to be the husband of half a dozen wives at one and the same time, we are satisfied it is not a sin in the Kaffir to-day. South African travellers have persistently described the natives of South Africa as a very low race intellectually. So far as regards the natives dwelling south of the Limpopo, I think this statement is accountable for a great deal of mischief done to the natives under the name of 'Native Policy.' The natives in this quarter are, it is true, semi-savages, and mentally of a low type; but their intellectual inferiority is not so great that they cannot argue you out of countenance if you propound a palpably weak proposition to them. Take, for example, the explanation given to the natives of the reasons which impelled the British to give back the Transvaal to the Boers. On the authority of the Royal Commissioners, the chiefs who had assembled at Pretoria were told that England gave back the Transvaal to the Boers because the country had been under a misapprehension annexed; and that England was such a justice-loving nation, that as soon as she discovered her mistake, she freely avowed it, and was about to rectify it. The natives immediately replied, If you are such a justice-loving people and desirous of giving to every man his due, why don't you give the country to us, since you know that we are the original owners, and not the Boers, who have driven us out of it?

The one stumbling-block to the progress of Christianity amongst this 'low type of people' is this: that they can see no benefit to themselves by embracing it. They have before them the 'white Christian' as an example; they see him a thief, a drunkard, and a breaker of the law, and the native has sufficient intelligence to argue that there is little to be gained by following the belief of the man who thus commits crime and does violence to his creed. Believing that any kind of tale is good enough for the Kaffir; imagining that he, with his 'low intellect,' cannot detect what would be palpable to a white man as a lie, the policy of England has been pernicious and baneful to the last degree to the black races of South Africa. We have always been boasting of our love of justice, and our desire to do justice to them, whilst by our actions we have been proving the hollowness of our speech. For ever telling them we intend raising them; for ever we continue to confirm them in their barbarism. The Boers are by far and away more honest in this respect than we are: they don't pretend to love the blacks, they don't pretend to educate and elevate them; on the contrary, they are very much grieved that anyone should propose such a scheme. They don't pretend to wish to do justice to the Kaffirs; they only pretend to keep them in strict subjection, on the principle that the superior race must govern the inferior race, if that race is black. The Kaffirs have, like the English, always been getting in the way of the Boers in South Africa, and have always been their enemies; and for this reason, that the Boers, like the English, have always coveted what belonged to the Kaffirs. With the British it is necessary to find some salve for the conscience after dispossessing the Kaffir of his land. The salve we apply is that of improving the Kaffir, and preventing bloodshed amongst them as soon as we have done our share of that business; but the Boer conscience does not require any such apology. Since we do not improve the Kaffirs, —it is a notorious fact that the few Christian Kaffirs there are, are as regards the vast majority far greater rogues than 'the heathen in his blindness,'—and since our policy has been productive of as much bloodshed as if we had left them alone, I say the Boers are more honest than the English in this connection.

It is true that the Boers have good cause to hate the Kaffirs.

Dingaan, a Zulu chief, who sold them Natal as far back as 1838, treacherously murdered Peter Retief and his seventy-nine followers directly after the deed was signed. Since then the Boers have always regarded the natives with suspicion and mistrust, a feeling almost amounting to hatred. The price that they were to pay for Natal—and they did perform their part of the contract—was to conquer one of Dingaan's enemies, a chief named Sikonyella. Like the British, therefore, the Boer initial policy towards the natives was to accept gladly anything given by the natives, and having obtained a footing, to take the rest by force. The natives had a partiality for retaining what belonged to them, so they resisted, and on more than one occasion inflicted heavy losses on the Boers, who, having now gained the upper hand, claim as victors the right to exact the penalty of service from a subject race.

I think it must be admitted that by nature the Boer is lazy and sluggish of disposition. He does not care to exert himself more than is absolutely necessary, and he is not that diligent, striving individual which the fancy of some of his recent admirers has painted him. The fact of his choosing a pastoral life is evidence of this, when by agricultural pursuits he would pecuniarily have greater gain. Servants he must have, even for the life he leads. Kaffirs make indifferent servants, but they are the only servants you can get in the Transvaal. The Boers, chary at any time of spending money, and having, when first they came to the country, little or none to spend, naturally forced Kaffirs to do their work. They made no secret of it, or of the continuance of the system until lately, when the slavery cry was raised and used as a stalking-horse by those anxious to bring every possible prejudice to bear against the restoration of the country to the Boers. Then the Boers in self-defence stoutly repudiated the idea as calumnious. They went further than that: they retaliated by alleging that the British Government, after annexing the Transvaal, under the guise of apprenticing Kaffirs, enslaved them. When the Volksraad, or legislative assembly of the Transvaal State, met to consider the Convention, the matter was brought prominently forward, *vide* the following extract from a report of the proceedings of that body:—

'His Hon. the Vice-President now requests the Raad to deviate from the order for the purpose of considering Resolution of Executive Council, of 10th October 1881, Article 67, reading as follows:—

'"Under discussion letter received from the Landdrost of the district of Potchefstrom, inquiring how he must act in the matter of some 800 Kaffirs who were apprenticed in that district by the British Government in September 1878.

'"The regulations as to apprenticeships made by the British Government were read.

'"Resolved: The Government regards these transactions of the British Government during the annexation as altogether in conflict with the earlier laws of this State, and also in conflict with the spirit of the Thirty-three Articles adopted by the emigrant Boers during their emigration in the year 1835, as also in conflict with the Sand River Convention of 1852; and whereas it appears to Government very hard to tear children away from their parents, and as it bears much the stamp of slavery to apprentice families and aged natives for years long, partly without pay, the Government recommends to the Hon. the Volksraad the release of these Kaffirs, together with their children, and to grant the Government the necessary power to cancel this kind of contract."

'Further, a letter was read from the Landdrost of Potchefstrom, dated 8th September 1881 (R 374, 8/81), and the conditions under which the natives in question were apprenticed, dated 29th August 1878. After some discussion, the State Attorney explained the matter. He pointed out how not only at Potchefstrom, but also at Pretoria and elsewhere, natives had been apprenticed. He thinks the Government is entitled to the thanks of the Volksraad for having brought this matter so early to its notice. He explains how this system of apprenticeship is worse than the system approaching to slavery against which an article in the Convention provides, since in terms of the conditions that have been read, children and parents were actually separated from each other.

'Messrs. Birkenstock, H. Pretorius, and Fouché, raise their voices against these doings of the British Government, and also show how the contract time of the parents, according to the contracts, expires before that of the children, and how they must thus be separated.

'Mr. H. Pretorius was in Pretoria when the apprenticing here took place. In the instructions it might stand that the service must be free; but he well knew how a certain Petrus, a chief constable, had been bribed by interested parties to use his influence with the natives who were to be apprenticed to elect this or that master in preference to others. He tried at the time to get some of these Kaffirs, but did not succeed.

'Mr Minnaar wishes to know how the Raad, looking at Article 3 of the Convention, can cancel these contracts.

'The State Attorney says there was no reference here to a law. It was an arbitrary measure on the part of the administrator to cause this apprenticeship to take place.

'The Hon. P. Joubert had noticed, pending the negotiations with the Royal Commission, how the society for the so-called protection of the natives of England had worked against this Government. He did not know at the time why, but thought now, with these documents before him, that that society had laboured under a misapprehension. There was, as he now saw, really slavery, not under the Government of the South African Republic, as the society thought, but under the British Government. That was the difference. During the discussion of the Convention, the remark was made that the Royal Commission had taken only that one article regarding slavery from the Sand River Convention, because it had found that this was the only clause which the British Government had not broken; but he now thought that it was taken over from the old Convention, just with reference to this apprenticeship under a British Administration, to provide against a similar example being followed, and to tacitly furnish this Government with the means of redressing what had wrongly and unlawfully happened under the British Government.

'After some discussion it was unanimously resolved:—

'"The Volksraad, having regard to the resolution of the Executive Council, dated 10th October 1881, Article 67, as also letter from the Landdrost of Potchefstrom to the State Secretary, dated 8th September 1881 (R 348/81), and the conditions of service of certain natives apprenticed by order of the British Government, dated 29th August 1878, proceeds to nominate a Commission of members, and requests the State Attorney to assist the same with his advice in this matter, in order to go through the documents thoroughly, and based thereon, to institute an accurate and searching inquiry respecting the transactions to which they refer, in order to be enabled to furnish the Volksraad with their report concerning the same."'

Dr. Livingstone was the first to call attention to the practice of slavery by the Boers, and his testimony remained unrefuted; the fact of there being incorporated in the Sand River Convention a clause which prohibited slavery, supports the allegation; and that slavery continued after the Sand River Convention was signed, and down to the time of the annexation, is equally a fact which abundant documentary evidence exists to prove—evidence which has never been and cannot be refuted. The Boers say that it was merely a system of 'inbooking' or apprenticeship that was carried on; but the manner of obtaining these apprentices,—capturing and detaining them as prisoners of war,—and the system of selling them publicly, is hardly consistent with our ideas of apprenticeship.

The Transvaal *Argus*, which at the time of the annexation protested against the act, said, with regard to the cancellation of the Sand River Convention: 'As slavery without a doubt is still carried on in the Transvaal contrary to its provisions, this may be the reason for the annexation.' The *Argus* at that time was a Boer organ, and its evidence on this point is the evidence of the Boers themselves.

That the voice of certain native chiefs was raised, and was heard by the British Government, complaining of injustice done to them by the Boers, long before the proposed retrocession of the country to the Boers, in fact, long before the annexation, there is some testimony. Take for instance the following petition and letter, and let them speak for themselves. I take them from the *Argus* file:—

'[*Copy.*]

'KHALAGARI, MOSHANENG, *August* 28, 1868.

'TO HIS EXCELLENCY HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S HIGH COMMISSIONER, SIR P. WODEHOUSE, K.C.B.

'*May it please your Excellency*,—

'To permit the undersigned, Chief of the Baralong, to take refuge under your protecting wings from the injustice of the Transvaal Republic, whose Government have lately, by proclamation, included our country within the possessions of the said Republic.

'Upwards of thirty years ago, when Commandant Henry Potgieter first left the colony with his party, he found our tribe living at Thaba 'Nchu with Maroko. We then warned the emigrant Boers not to go near the Moselekatsi, for he would surely attack them if they came within his reach. But they would not listen, and went on to Canaan. After their party were almost entirely destroyed on the banks of the Vaal River, the Baralong fetched the remainder back to Thaba 'Nchu, where they during two years received every possible kindness and hospitality. By and by others came from this colony, and by force of persuasion we at last yielded to enter into an alliance with Commandant Potgieter, to assist him in avenging himself on Moselekatsi, on condition that, if we succeeded to dislodge the Matabele, we should have our father's country back, and live under our own rule, which was agreed to.

'Leading the Boers on to the Lion's Den, we warred at our own expense, had our own horses, guns, ammunition, and victuals, and consequently refused to take any of the captured stock. We had only one desire, which was to have our old country, where the graves are of our fathers.

'Moselekatsi was defeated. Soon after the Boers moved into the newly-cleared territory, and the Baralong, under Chief Tasane, my late father, returned to their grounds, whilst Maroko remained at Thaba 'Nchu.

'When Commandant A. Pretorius had lost the day at Port Natal, and immigrated into the Transvaal country, J. C. Potgieter duly informed the new-comers of the alliance that existed between the Republican Boers and the Baralong, and of the rights of the latter to their country. Potgieter then went to Lydenburg: one Pretorius and his party stayed in the south-western parts.

'About 1850, one Boer after another took possession of the fountains and lands of the Baralong, when in 1851 the latter complained to Commandant A. Pretorius. He appointed a Commission of Commandants, field-cornets, and others, when a boundary line was agreed on between the Republic and the Baralong. This line was to be the Hartz River, from where it entered into the Vaal River, up to the eye of Hartz River, which is Elandsfontein; from there, with the wagon-road to the head fountain called Pagovurmahe; thence west to the wagon drift of the road from Lotlakana, to Klein Marico, along the said road northward.

'In 1853, by the most crying injustice, the Boers attacked us, and after fighting a whole day, they found out that there existed no grounds whatever for such bloodshed, and calling themselves a "blind commando," they left. All the farmers of Klein Marico then fled from their homesteads, fearing we would retaliate. Several seasons passed till at last the Boers made some overtures for settlement. On coming to terms with Commandant Jan Viljoen and the new President M. Pretorius, the old boundary line was agreed to on both sides. But knowing how little the promises of the Boers can be trusted, we would not go back to our old residence, Lotlakana, but continued to sojourn with the Bangoaketse tribe, to keep somewhat out of the reach of the Boers.

'And now, without the least provocation on our side, though the Boers have from time to time murdered some of my people and enslaved several Balala villages, the Transvaal Republic deprives us, by said proclamation, of our land and our liberty, against which we would protest in the strongest terms, and entreat your Excellency, as Her Britannic Majesty's High Commissioner, to protect us.—I remain, etc.,

'MONTSIOA TAOANE, Chief of the Baralong.'

'[*Copy.*]

'KHALAGARI, MOSHANENG, *August* 28, 1868.

'TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TRANSVAAL ARGUS."

'SIR,—When the game are seen suddenly starting, and from all sides desperately running for their lives, we, the inhabitants of these wilds, make sure that the lion is among them. From several Balala villages fugitives have just come in, stating that last week Field-cornet Kronje from Schoenspruit, with seven wagons and about thirty armed men, suddenly set on the village of Bakuyakuye to the west of Hartz River, in my country, and carried off men, women, children, and cattle into captivity. One man only, who had crept into a hole, escaped to bring this news. Another division of the same party, and it would appear on the same day, attacked the village of Jochom, a Koranna, on the Hartz River, stealing the women and children of the Balala belonging to the Chiefs Gasitsive and Ramatlaku. A father seeing his daughter in danger at the fountain, hastened to her rescue, but one of the "Christenmenschen" put the muzzle of his gun to the father's breast and forced him to surrender. Coming back to the house, the man ran for his weapon, saying, "I also am a man, and what is life to me if my child is to be a slave?" The headmen of the village, however, forbade him to defend himself or daughter. Shortly after the captives were marched away. Since Jochom got information that the Boers would ere long return to finish the whole village, on which they dispersed to all quarters, Jochom alone came to tell me of the *justice* of the Boers.

'Can you tell me, Mr. Editor, what this signifies, that the lion is thus among my children?—Yours most respectfully,

'MONTSIOA TAOANE, Chief of the Baralong.'

Holding in such high esteem the Kaffir, it is not matter for wonder that British native policy is thoroughly repugnant to the Dutch farmers, and that our interference with the labour supply, and our ultra-philanthropic ideas respecting the natives of this country, should find a place in a recital of the causes of the war for independence. Natal itself, the white population of which has hardly two ideas in common with the Boer on the native question, would be justified in claiming her independence from Imperial control, if on no other ground than Imperial mismanagement of the natives in Natal. What is the extent of the grievance with the Boers on this subject can be readily conceived. One of the main reasons which induced the Boers to 'trek' from the Old Colony, and to seek pastures new, was England's native policy. It is a policy which has been the cause of more bloodshed in South Africa than any other known act. It is a policy unstable as water,—one day coaxing the native, the next rebuking him; encouraging him to-day to do wrong, and punishing him to-morrow for his fault; thrashing him one minute, chaining him and bullying him, and in the next breath making amends to him for yesterday's treatment. As rapidly as the conviction can come to the mind of a man, the native is becoming convinced that the splendid attributes of the English, their prowess, their sense of justice and uprightness, is a fraud that has been perpetrated on him. He is fast advancing out of the age of simplicity, when as a child he would believe anything and everything which would glorify and extol us as a civilised race; his estimate of us is, I believe, lower to-day than it ever was before; and this is the result of our rule and treatment of the native by a policy which may be truly described as an admixture of injustice and severity, vacillation and weakness, indecision and fear, hesitation and crude theory. The Kaffirs understand the Boer because they fear him, and with them fear is the beginning of understanding. Could the Boers only believe that the Kaffir is a human being, possessed of a soul, and entitled to some further consideration and justice at their hands, they would do more in a year in the way of civilising him than we with our nostrums would achieve in ten years.

On this side of the grave, at least, there is no likelihood of any unity of feeling between English statesmen and Boers, or any other men who know native character in the southern part of this continent, on the native question; and so long as the native policy is in the hands of Downing Street officials, so long will it miserably fail in its ostensible object, just as it has ignominiously failed in the past. Until England relinquishes the task in despair, or is persuaded of her ignorance of the problem, and abandons it to those who, on the spot, are better able to comprehend it, the native question will always be an open sore and an irritating wound to colonists, whether Boers or British, in this part of South Africa.

CHAPTER II.

THE ACT OF ANNEXATION.

IF the promises made by Sir Theophilus Shepstone at the time of the annexation—promises which there is every reason to believe he intended to carry out—had been fulfilled, the late disastrous war would never have happened, because there would have been nothing for agitators to take hold of, except the sentimental grievance of the country being annexed while a score or two of its inhabitants personally were averse to the act of annexation against the wish of the great majority. If it is to be an established rule that an insignificant minority is to hinder the desire of the vast majority, then we have arrived at an age when all precedent is useless, and reason can no longer claim any rank whatever. The annexation by Sir Theophilus Shepstone was an act which undoubtedly the great majority of the Boers welcomed; in spite of their natural dislike to the English and English rule, in spite of their antipathy to our native policy, in spite of their love of independence, they were glad that England took upon herself the duty of governing their country, and for this reason, that the Boers knew that they were on the verge of ruin and disaster, from which they could not save themselves. They had neither credit nor the hope of credit; the Free State would not come to their aid; their own countrymen in the Old Colony could do no more for them. Sekukuni on one side, Cetewayo on the other, defied and threatened to overwhelm them. The Zulus disputed their right to Utrecht and part of Wakkerstrom, and the burghers were not willing to try their right by an appeal to arms, because they knew they were not strong enough to encounter successfully Cetewayo's warriors. Besides, the campaign against Secocoeni had in the result, whether it was or was not a victory for the Boers, disheartened a great many of the farmers who took part in it. The country was divided; there was no unity, no attempt to pull together. President Burgers strove in vain to carry on the government. The old Dutch party had never accepted him, and his failure to accomplish impossibilities increased his unpopularity. The difficulties of the Boers at this time offered a splendid excuse for England to advance a stage farther in South Africa. This time she had ostensibly a good excuse for her policy of annexation or appropriation, but the motive which urged England to annex was, I believe, the same as when with longing eyes she looked at the diamond-fields, and finally robbed the Boers of that slice of territory. It was greed and the love of filthy lucre. This time it was gold which excited our cupidity. The development of the gold-fields in the Transvaal gave rise to expectations as to their value which probably will never be fully realized, but the expectation was sufficient to attract us. Is it consistent with the manner in which, from time immemorial, we have treated the Boers in South Africa, that our intervention or annexation of the country was the outcome of our love for the Boers? If it was, then the love was of sudden growth; at all events, it was synchronal with the information received in England that payable gold existed in their country.

When the Transvaal and Free State wished in 1859 to confederate, England opposed and prevented that scheme. When the Transvaal was weak and wanted help, and England was convinced of her need for help, we did not consider the former desire of the people as worth referring to; we did not, out of our sheer philanthropy and love for the Boers, suggest or further their union with the Free State—with a people certainly more acceptable to the Boers of the Transvaal than would be the British. That would not have answered our purpose; for already we had repented of giving up the Free State to the people dwelling there. In our haste to acquire the Transvaal, we overreached ourselves; because, but for the haste with which we acted, the Boers would not have had even the sentimental grievance that we 'took' their country from them. Had we waited two or three months (most authorities say six months as the greatest limit), the Boers would simply have asked us to accept and take over the government of the country, because the Free State at that time certainly would not have incurred such a responsibility, in return for which there were no corresponding advantages to be gained. The country and the treasury was in a state of chronic beggary; they had reached the point when no further credit could be obtained in any direction. This financial collapse was not the result of temporary pressing need; since its foundation the Republic had ever been troubled with an eternal want of pence.

In the *Staats Courant* report, of the 9th March 1868, of the proceedings of the Volksraad, is a minute in these words:—'On account of the treasury being empty, and the President having been authorized by the Volksraad to raise a loan of £300, the President reports to the Volksraad that Mr. Buhrmann is willing to advance the sum of £50 sterling towards the loan, but on condition only that good security be given him. The Volksraad thereupon resolves that, whereas the Government cannot obtain money without giving security, to withdraw the authority of the President to borrow.'

The first issue of notes by the Republic represented a sum of £12,000. This was to be redeemed at eighteen months, with six per cent. added. When that period expired, the Republic had to raise £20,000 in the same manner, in order to redeem the first issue.

At financing the Boer Republic never was remarkable for ability. To what extent this inability was a thorn in the flesh to the President, the Volksraad, and the people, may be gathered from the subjoined extract:—'Article 212, Volksraad Resolution, 28th Nov. 1867, published in *Staats Courant*, No. 235, of 22d January 1868. Proposed by Mr. Evans, seconded by the Hon. Mr. Steyn: Whereas His Excellency the State President acted illegally and contrary to the Volksraad resolution of the 5th April 1866, Article 653, by issuing more notes than was ordered, the Raad resolves to hand over this matter to the State Attorney for him to inquire strictly into it. Carried.'

Against Mr. Evans a few days after this a charge of theft was made. Struben, a member who supported it, was charged with perjury, and Steyn received a sound thrashing from an unknown hand as he was going home at night. The two members charged with crime, the Volksraad exonerated some time later on, but no counter charge was ever brought against their accusers. The Volksraad also refusing to accept Pretorius' resignation, he withdrew it, and nothing more thereafter was heard of the charge against him.

If Sir Theophilus Shepstone made any mistake in annexing the

Transvaal, his error was the result of a little not unnatural impatience to obey orders, having once become satisfied that a majority of the inhabitants desired it. What was the nature and extent of his secret orders may be gathered from a remark that fell from Sir Arthur Cunningham when addressing the troops in the Transvaal a short time after the annexation. Sir Arthur Cunningham was Commander-in-Chief of H.M. forces in South Africa, and presumably some weight may be attached to this utterance:—'*I am pleased to find that war has been averted*, *as no soldiers desire fighting if it can be prevented*, especially against their white brethren.' I take it, then, that Sir Theophilus Shepstone's instructions were to annex, *if necessary* even to fight the Boers before annexing their country.

That by far and away an overwhelming majority of the people desired British intervention and British or any Government to take the place of their own Government, which was only a Government in name, is undeniable, if the honest truth is told. It would not suit the Boers now to make such an admission, since there has been so great a revolution of feeling amongst them, therefore they stoutly deny it. They will tell you that President Burgers betrayed them; they will tell you that the people were apathetic and indifferent, and for that reason did not send fifty burghers to oppose Shepstone's score of policemen; they will tell you anything to account for their apparent supineness and apathy, because to admit that they welcomed the advent of Shepstone, would be to cut away one of their main arguments in favour of the restoration of the country to their rule. Truer words were never uttered in any one speech from the throne proroguing an English Parliament than those uttered on the 14th August of that year: 'The proclamation of my sovereignty in the Transvaal has been recorded throughout the province with enthusiasm.' Take the press. The Boer organ, the *Volksstem*, the only journal in Pretoria, was edited by Mr. Celliers, who came from the Cape Colony at the time of Mr. Burgers' arrival. At the office of the *Volksstem* the proclamation of Sir Theo. Shepstone was printed by Mr. Celliers' consent. It was the only printing office available, and, as Sir Owen Lanyon has pointed out in one of his despatches, if the feeling against the annexation had been anything more than a nominal sentiment, Mr. Celliers would not have aided the publication of a proclamation which took the government out of the Boers' hands. The *Volksstem*, in reviewing the work of the special session of the Volksraad, convened to deal with the critical matters of the day, had the following remarks:—'During the session we have repeatedly had occasion to comment on the doings of the Raad. On the whole, these comments have not been favourable to the political wisdom of our senators, and we regret to say that we have found in the closing scenes of our Legislature no cause to alter our opinion. . . . The first matter that came before the Raad was the Secocoeni peace, and how was it treated? It was simply carped at as too easy in terms for the rebel and talked at, some hon. members roundly stating that they disapproved of the peace, utterly oblivious apparently of the fact that in May last they had entrusted the concluding of peace to the Government. And what did all the talk end in? In this: no sooner had a request or demand come in from the public outside to pass the treaty, than the very parties who had first stated that they disapproved of the treaty, made and carried a resolution *approving of the same!* Very independent members these! Next came *the* great question of the session—Lord Carnarvon's Confederation Bill. This hon. members insisted upon dealing with in connection with Sir T. Shepstone's visit, notwithstanding the President's repeated request to treat them separately. . . . A fine jumble then ensued. With the exception of a couple of members, no one had the sense or manliness to go into the question of confederation. . . . Most of the hon. gentlemen were great in protesting that they would not give up the country's freedom, that they were not going to sacrifice their independence, that the question rested with the people; but they resolutely shut their eyes to the deplorable state of the country, and did not give one single hint as to the way of getting the country out of that condition. . . . Recourse was had to a committee to confer with the Government as to what was to be done. Some of the members of this committee, who had only the previous day proclaimed to the world their fervent patriotism and their unalterable determination to remain free and independent, were accused of conduct which, if proved against them, would, according to the highest legal functionary in the State, be tantamount to high treason. . . . The most surprising feature of the whole affair was this: that most of the speakers seemed not to have the faintest conception of the desperate condition in which the country stood. . . . His Honour told them plainly that the country is totally lost, and that there would be no Volksraad in May if some vast reform be not effected now, and rigorously carried out; but besides a few ill-natured growls, because His Honour had not told them so before, the Raad resumed its peaceful, quiet attitude, brushed the reform programme and the draft constitution off the table, and appointed a committee to go into the finances. . . . At the eleventh hour, the Raad showed that they felt the necessity for reform, and adopted the whole of the President's programme. Thus hon. members, while

"Protesting they would ne'er relent, relented;
And vowing they would ne'er consent, consented."

It is true that some most important stipulations in the reform scheme have been left out. Some provision about these matters will have to be made if the country retains its own Legislature. For the present we are content with the measure as passed, and it now rests with the country whether they will accept the last remedy prescribed for retaining their independence, which they are said to prize so very highly. On the last day of the session, Mr. Kruger was elected Vice-President, of course, as an indication of the eminently progressive tendency of the Raad. . . . On the whole, we consider that the Volksraad has, during the special session just closed, shown a lamentable want of practical common sense, an absence of courage to grapple unpalatable and difficult questions, and that the good measures passed were pressed from them at the last moment, when the imminent danger of the country could no longer be ignored. The obstinacy of the Raad to all progress has never been more marked than in this session.'

A fortnight later the *Volksstem* complained of the injustice of the course pursued by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in annexing the country against the wish of the majority of the population, but urged the people to submit and not to offer resistance.

To quote again from the *Volksstem*, Mr. Celliers wrote on February 3:—'The position to which the country is brought now is this, that it must either accept confederation or some other union with the other South African States and Colonies under the British flag; or the burghers should loyally, promptly, and vigorously act up to their legal obligations, and support the Government which they have themselves appointed. . . . If no improvement takes place, anarchy must ensue, and the country will be totally ruined. The people have to choose now, and their choice must be made quickly and acted upon. It is true the Volksraad has been convened in special session on the 13th, but the Volksraad can do no more than authorize the Government to refer the question to the people. At whatever resolution the Legislature may arrive, there is sure to be *a considerable portion of the people that will not submit to their decision, as has been repeatedly the case.* The question will therefore have to be submitted direct to the country.'

For the last time I will quote the *Volksstem* (March 28): 'About three months ago we said we would prefer confederation under the British flag if the state of anarchy then threatening were to continue. We have been called turncoats, weathercocks, and suchlike for this announcement; but we care very little for such strong words, for we know that a good and stable Government is better than anarchy any day, and we prefer seeing the people and the country saved, even if it was to be done in spite of the inhabitants; and we now say, or rather repeat, that the prolonged independence of this country rests with the people; and that if the country must fall, it depends upon us whether it is to fall honourably or not.'

The *Argus*, published at Potchefstrom on the 13th April, before it received the news of the annexation, contained the following:— 'No one would glory more in a strong, united, really independent South African Republic than we, and none but ourselves know what it costs us to have to endorse the opinion that the annexation of the Transvaal by the British Government is justifiable.' In its next issue, when it heard that this justifiable act had been committed, the *Argus* uttered its protest, just as did the *Volksstem*, just as did Mr. Burgers and others who were convinced that British rule was indispensable to the existence of the country. Everyone who protested rejoiced that he had cause for protest.

The Free State journals, the Cape press, and the Holland newspapers used strong language when they heard of the event. The *Daily News* and other London Liberal journals gave approval to the act. If the press is an indicator of the public mind, in England, in the Transvaal, in Natal, the annexation was accepted by the public as a fair and just act. Three thousand out of eight thousand of the adult male population of Boers in the Transvaal signed petitions in favour of it. If further evidence is wanted to show the true state of the Transvaal at the time of the annexation, take a work published in 1879 by Mr. Theodore Tromp (*Herrinnerin gen Zuit Afrika.* Leiden: E. Brill), an author devoid of British prejudices. He says, p. 279: 'Certain it is that during the latter days of its existence the condition of the Republic was so peculiar that nothing like it in the world's history is to be met with. The confusion in the authority of the State; the stupid unwillingness of the Boers to assist in any way; the pressure of widely diverging parties; the foreign influences that detrimentally affected the course of things; the widely differing elements that composed the State; the relative attitude of the whites and natives,—all this, and many more reasons, reduced the vitality of the young Republic to a minimum.'

No man has been more abused than Sir Theophilus Shepstone in connection with the annexation of the Transvaal, because if there was an error, his was, it is presumed, the initial error, that of misleading Liberals and Conservatives as to the feeling of the burghers of the country. Much unmerited abuse might have been saved him if a record of a plebiscite of the people existed. Could he, with the evidence then before him, have foreseen the possibility of an agitation raised by two or three disappointed men, he would no doubt have guarded his act by adopting such a plan. As regards the Legislature of that day,—or rather the Executive Council,—the following translation of an extract from the minutes, of the 11th April 1877, will show the course they adopted at the juncture:—

'Art. 7.—On the order is a letter of Her British Majesty's Special Commissioner, of 9th April 1877, giving notice that His Excellency has arrived at the conclusion to proclaim, without loss of time, British sovereignty over the South African Republic.

'Resolved: That whereas Her British Majesty's Government has solemnly pledged the independence of the Transvaal; whereas the Government of the South African Republic is not conscious of ever having given to Her Majesty's Government any cause for dissatisfaction, nor ever offered any ground for such act of violence; whereas this Government has even shown its readiness, and is now prepared to do all which can be asked in right and equity to remove all causes of complaint; whereas this Government has repeatedly expressed its willingness to conclude any Conventions which may be thought necessary for the general security of the white population, and is prepared punctually to execute such agreements; whereas, in accordance with public utterances on the part of Her Majesty's Secretary for Colonies, Lord Carnarvon, there exists no desire on the part of the British Government to force the people of the South African Republic against its will, and whereas the people, either by memorials or otherwise, by a large majority, have plainly made known not to be desirous thereof; whereas the Government is convinced not to be in a position to defend the rights and independence of the people against Great Britain with arms, and further wishes to take no step whereby the white settlers of South Africa, in the face of the common enemy, should be divided against each other, or be brought to a conflict, to the great detriment of all Christian people in South Africa, before the very last means have been tried to assure the rights of the people by peaceful and amicable means: So is it that the Government most strongly protests against this action of Her Majesty's Special Commissioner, resolving further to despatch immediately a Commission of Representatives to Europe and America, with power and instructions to add to itself, if necessary, a third person, to try in the first instance to appeal to Her Majesty's Government; and if this should have no result, which the Government should regret, and can as yet not believe, then to try and invoke the friendly help and assistance of other Powers, foremost of those who have acknowledged the independence of this country. As members of the Commission were appointed—Dr. E. J. P. Jorrisen, State Attorney, and Mr. S. J. P. Kruger, Vice-President of the South African Republic.

'Art. 8.—On the proposition of Mr. S. J. P. Kruger, it was resolved to add Mr. C. van Boeschoten as a member of the Commission.

'Signed—Thomas Burgers, N. J. R. Swart, E. J. P. Jorrisen, C. J. Juta, S. J. P. Kruger, C. Holtzhuisen, H. Siemens, Secretary Executive Council.'

In Sir Theophilus Shepstone's Commission one of the provisos was: 'That no such proclamation (*i.e.* proclamation of annexation) should be issued by you with respect to any district, territory, or state, unless you shall be satisfied that the inhabitants thereof, or a sufficient number of them, or the Legislature thereof, desire to become our subjects, nor if any conditions unduly limiting our power and authority therein are sought to be imposed.' This paragraph has of course been made much of by those who contend that Sir Theophilus' act in the face of the resolution of the Executive was unjustifiable. But if we examine the value of the Boer Executive Council of that day, as a Council representing the people, or having anything more than a nominal authority, we find that the Executive Council, just as much as the Volksraad or Chamber of Deputies, neither represented the people, had any authority over the people, nor was respected by the people. Take the speeches of President Burgers—the same gentleman who signed the above-cited protest—in the Volksraad, delivered on February 16th and March 3d and 5th (a month before the annexation). On the 16th February, after complaining that the members had burked the question of the mission of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, he said: 'This Raad, however many burghers may be here, should not by any means be under the least compulsion, or should be intimidated from uttering their opinions according to their conscience. Every one is totally free, and bound to express here unrestrained and candidly that of which he is convinced. I speak thus, Mr. Chairman, because I have felt grieved, ay, indignant, in hearing the speeches of some who a few days ago expressed themselves in private quite differently from what they have done here about this question.'

On the day following, Burgers refused to confer with three out of a deputation of four members of the Raad appointed to consult with him on the question of confederation, because they had not paid their taxes. On the 3d of March, the President read these words to the assembly:

'I would rather be a policeman under a strong Government than a President of such a State. It is you—you members of the Raad and the Boers, who have lost the country, who have sold your independence for a *soupie* (a drink). You have ill-treated the natives, you have shot them down, you have sold them into slavery, and now you have to pay the penalty.

. . . .

'We should delude ourselves by entertaining the hope that matters would mend by and by. It would be only self-deceit. I tell you openly, matters are as bad as they ever can be; they cannot be worse. These are bitter truths, and people may perhaps turn their backs on me; but then I shall have the consolation of having done my duty.

. . . .

'It is said here, this or that man must be released from taxes because the Kaffirs have driven them off their farms and occupy the latter. By this you proclaim to the world that the strongest man is master here, that the right of the strongest obtains here. [Mr. Maré: This is not true.] Then it is not true what the honourable member, Mr. Breytenbach, has told us about the state of the Lydenburg district; then it is not true either what another member has said about the farms in Saltpansberg, which are occupied by Kaffirs. Neither is it true then what I saw with my own eyes at Lydenburg, where the burghers had been driven off their farms by the Kaffirs, and where Johannes was ploughing and sowing on the land of a burgher. These are facts, and they show that the strongest man is the master here. The fourth point which we have to take into account affects our relations with our English neighbours. It is asked, what have they got to do with our position? I tell you, as much as we have to do with that of our Kaffir neighbours. As little as we can allow barbarities among the Kaffirs on our borders, as little can they allow that in a state on their borders anarchy and rebellion should prevail.

. . . .

'Do you know what has recently happened in Turkey? Because no civilised Government was carried on there, the Great Powers interfered and said, "Thus far and no farther." And if this is done to an empire, will a little republic be excused when it misbehaves?

. . . .

'Complain to other Powers and seek justice there? Yes, thank God! justice is still to be found, even for the most insignificant; but it is precisely the justice which will convict us. If we want justice, we must be in a position to ask it with unsullied hands.

. . . .

'Whence has arisen that urgency to make an appeal for interference elsewhere? Has that appeal been made only by enemies of the State? Oh no, gentlemen; it has arisen from real grievances. Our people have degenerated from their former position; they have become demoralised; they are not what they ought to be.

. . . .

'To-day a bill for £1100 was laid before me for signature; but I would sooner have cut off my right hand than sign that paper, for I have not the slightest ground to expect that when that bill becomes due there will be a penny to pay it with.'

The President added, and his statements remained uncontradicted: 'The principal thing which had brought them to their present position was that to which they would not give attention; it was not this or that thing which impeded their way, but they themselves stopped the way; and if they asked him what prevented the people from remaining independent, he answered that the Republic was itself the obstruction, owing to the inherent incapacity and weakness of the people. But whence this weakness? Was it because they were deformed, because they were worse than other people? Because they were too few and insignificant to occupy the country? Those arguments did not weigh with him. They were not true; he did not consider them of any importance. The people were as good as any other people, but they were completely demoralized; they had lost faith in God, reliance upon themselves, or trust in each other. Hence he believed they were inherently weak.

. . . .

'He did not believe that a new constitution would save them, for as little as the old constitution had brought them to ruin, so little would a new constitution bring them salvation.

. . . .

'The Great Powers, with all their greatness, all their thousands of soldiers, would fall as quickly as this State had fallen, and even more quickly, if their citizens were to do what the citizens of this State had done; if the citizens of England had behaved towards the Crown as the burghers of this State had behaved to their Government, England would never have stood as long as she had, not even as long as this State had stood. This State owed obligations to other countries; they knew that the fire which had nearly consumed this State, would, if felt by them, very soon consume them also.

. . . .

'In several of the cities of Holland there were people who had subscribed for only one debenture because they thought men of their own blood were living in South Africa. What was the consequence? The interest up to July last had been paid; in January of this year £2250 was due for interest, and there was not a penny to meet it.

. . . .

'To take up arms and fight was nonsense; to draw the sword would be to draw the sword against God, for it was God's judgment that the State was in the condition it was to-day, and it was their duty to inquire whether they should immerse in blood the thousands of innocent inhabitants of this country, and if so, what for? For an idea; something they had in their heads, but not in their hearts; for an independence which is not prized? Let them make the best of the situation, and get the best terms they possibly could; let them agree to join their hands to those of their brethren in the south, and then from the Cape to the Zambesi there would be one great people. Yes, there was something grand in that, grander even than their idea of a republic, something which ministered to their national feeling. And would this be so miserable? Yes, this would be miserable for those who would not be under the law, for the rebel and the revolutionist, but welfare and prosperity for the men of law and order.

. . . .

'They must not underrate their real and many difficulties. He could point to the south-western border, the Zulu, the gold fields, and other questions, and show them that it was their duty to come to an arrangement with the British Government, and to do so in a bold and manly manner. An hon. member on Saturday last had spoken with fervent patriotism, but he had failed to appreciate the reference, because it amounted to this—that they must shut their eyes to everything so as to keep their independence.'

The Volksraad, on the occasion when these utterances were delivered by its President, was discussing the question of confederation. The Raad had been called together specially for that object, and to bring about some reforms necessary, if the government of the country by the Boers was to be even attempted any longer. How high personal feeling ran may be gathered from the fact that during this session the State Attorney (Jorrisen) accused three members who had not paid their taxes of 'high treason,' but he was immediately cried down by shouts of 'baboon,' 'liar,' etc.

Sir Theophilus Shepstone had already been some time in the country, and the object of his mission was known to everyone. There was the confederation scheme and the annexation scheme. The former was not acceptable to the Boers. They said, 'Let us go the whole hog or none'; and in their extremity they were content and pleased with the prospect of annexation by the British, which of course offered immediate advantage to their country, and advantages compared to which those of confederating with the Cape Colony or any other neighbour would have been next to nothing.

Shepstone knew that whatever the Volksraad or Executive Council might resolve upon in regard to the question of annexation, the vast majority of the people were anxious for that step to be taken by him as the representative of the English Government; and considering the order in the wording of the proviso I have already quoted from his commission, he no doubt felt justified in regarding the will of the majority of the people as paramount, and overriding the desire of any Volksraad or Executive Council, looking at the constitution of the one and the other, and that as representative assemblies they were nothing better than a farce.

President Burgers, it has been stated, was never accepted by what is known in the Transvaal as 'the Old Dutch party,' in other words, the 'Doppers,' or the most ignorant class in the Transvaal. That can be readily understood, because Burgers was an intelligent man, and an intelligent man, having the slightest inclination to keep pace with the times, is regarded by the Dopper as something more than an *enfant terrible*, a magician inspired by the evil one. The explanation of Burgers' plain speaking, as given by the Boers nowadays, is that he was a traitor to the country, and sold it to secure 'his pension' from the English. That Burgers has been in receipt of a pension has been freely and frequently stated of late. It is only fair, therefore, to reproduce the very explicit denial and explanation recently made by Mr. Burgers, taken from the Zutpensche *Courant*. The editor of that paper requested Burgers for direct information, and received the following reply:—

'The whole affair is an invention. Neither from the British Government nor that of the Transvaal do I receive a pension. Repeat this safely!

'After the annexation, Shepstone promised me a contribution of £1000 per annum out of the treasury of the Transvaal, as a recompense of the losses of money I suffered by payment made by me in the Secocoeni war, for loss of salary, etc. Of this promise nothing has come, and probably it was only made to induce me, who had lost everything, to leave the Transvaal, where I had no prospect of a livelihood.

'This did not prevent, however, a report being circulated in the newspapers that I drew a pension of £750 from the English Government. I contradicted it, stating, at the same time, that I would not accept a farthing from England, but would do so from the Transvaal for what rightfully belonged to me.

'In spite of this they continued to slander me. In 1878, one year after the annexation, when I literally, with wife and children, was suffering from want, and had left Cape Town, with the assistance of some friends, to obtain livelihood somewhere in the Transvaal, pressure was brought on the Governor by some friends to give me some compensation for the losses that I had suffered, and in July 1878, while I, with wife and children, had found harbour in a shepherd's hut on a farm close to Hanover, received information that they would allow me £500 per annum out of the Transvaal treasury till such time that I had a livelihood.

'From that time, and not before (Shepstone's promise, on which I had consulted my friends, came to nothing), was there talk of this "retiring allowance." I received this as my rightful property, and as soon as I shall have received my lost money,—which from the high rate of interest here must last at least twelve years,—this "allowance" will, if not sooner withdrawn, be discontinued.

'In the meanwhile, I must bind myself for the repayment of the interest of that sum at 9 per cent. per annum. Look here, this is the pure truth. And I ask you, who would be so foolish as not to make a claim on his own property? Let them immediately recompense me for my financial losses, and I will indignantly reject every offer of "allowance."

'I have, in the service of the Transvaal, entirely lost my health; I gave up for it a good position I held in the colony, and five of the best years of my life; but for that I claim nothing—I only ask my property back which I have lost there.

'On my name, I have taken up £22,000 for the expenses of the war; at my expense, I have with my staff made the campaign; and my immovable property I have mortgaged to pay the volunteers at the forts; and whilst I went to the Transvaal with some wealth, I returned from there with little more than a few hundred pounds sterling, the proceeds of my furniture, but remained with a debt on me of £25,000. Of this the Government of the Transvaal paid off about £22,000, but the balance remained for my account.

'I wish to God that both Cachet and his faithful adherents in

Holland had to labour only for a single month alongside of me, and to cultivate the land, for then they will see how enjoyably I live on the fruits of my traitorship.

'No *traitor* was I, but the betrayed, the forsaken, who in vain tried to save the country.

'Thanks to such men as Cachet, they have succeeded in making the Boers disloyal to their Government, to bring me down, because it was agonizing to think that Burgers, the hated heretic, should be at the head of a free people. And with my fall, fell the Republic, which is, as they say, restored, but only resuscitated in chains.

'If all those who slander me knew for a moment what it cost me to remain silent on account of the Boers, they would feel for my self-sacrifice. Had I spoken, Gladstone would not, even in appearance, have made the Transvaal free again.

'But enough has been said over this unpleasant case. You may safely make use of these facts, not for the sake of my detractors, but that of the truth. Believe me to remain, with unalterable esteem,—Yours, THOMAS BURGERS.'

Looking back again to the history of the Transvaal, immediately following the annexation and the passing by the Boer Executive Council of the protest, it will be found that, with only one or two exceptions, all the officials of the old Government accepted office under the Government introduced to the country by Sir Theophilus Shepstone. Indeed, Piet Joubert was practically the only member of the Republican Government who showed himself a true patriot, and refused to be tempted by the new-comers. Piet Joubert, if men are to be judged by their actions and not their words, was then the only man whose protest against annexation was honest.

It is believed by some, who have a right to be heard as authorities, that the desire of Lord Carnarvon to annex the Transvaal was only the natural result of his desire to bring about his grand scheme of confederation for South Africa. It may be so, but I question whether that was the sole motive, or whether Lord Carnarvon was the only participator in the scheme.

Whether Shepstone acted prematurely or not, undoubtedly his instructions amounted to a command to annex the Transvaal, given a sufficient pretext. The commission to him commences: 'Whereas grievous disturbances have broken out in the territories adjacent to our colonies in South Africa, with war between the white inhabitants and the native races, to the great peril of the peace and safety of our said colonies; and whereas, having regard to the safety of our said colonies, it greatly concerns us that full inquiry should be made into the origin, nature, and circumstances of the said disturbance, and with respect to the measures to be adopted for preventing the recurrence of the like disturbances in the future'; and the context runs on in effect, 'You may annex the Transvaal.' Here the prominent, indeed sole idea, is to protect the English colonies; but in what possible way could the acquisition of a still greater extent of country in South Africa, and the creation of a new colony, prove a protection to the colonies already possessed by England? If to extend the area one has to defend is one way of securing additional protection, then there is no limit to argument; and when a military commander has a weak front, it is in accordance with common sense and military strategy that he should extend his front to strengthen it. The pretext which was to be a sufficient one for him to act upon, was that of the will and desire of the people for the measure; but an extract from Lord Carnarvon's speech on the second reading of the South Africa Act (April 23) points to such a desire as a foregone conclusion. His Lordship said: 'Knowing as I do how much *the Boers and the people of the Transvaal desire to come under British rule*, I have no doubt that in the end the Transvaal will become British territory, but I have no desire, if it can be avoided, to take over that State.' There was no telegraphic communication between South Africa and England in those days; already, before these words were uttered, the Transvaal for some days had been part and parcel of Her Majesty's dominions.

Anyone who knows the acquaintance Sir T. Shepstone had with the Boers of the Transvaal, years prior to the annexation, cannot doubt that, regarded as a friend and almost as one of themselves, no one better than he could have been selected for the task of ascertaining the desires of the people; and no one who knows Sir T. Shepstone will believe that he did not take sufficient evidence to prove to any man that the Boers were anxious to be extricated from the dilemma they were in, and really willing at that time that their country should be annexed. Men who during the late war were our foes were at the time of the annexation clamouring for it, welcoming Sir Theophilus Shepstone as the deliverer and saviour of the country. I mention Swart Dirk Uys, an eminent Boer, who fought against the English in 1880–81, as one amongst the hundreds and thousands who went out to meet Sir Theophilus Shepstone with palm branches in their hands.

The natural aversion of the people to English rule was overcome for the moment by their greater aversion to being wiped off the face of the Transvaal by the blacks; that was a contingency staring them in the face, and yet not even that imminent common danger availed to secure unity amongst them, or would rouse men individually to take upon their shoulders the responsibility which rests upon every member of a state.

The Boer Volksraad, after promising to appeal to their constituents on the subject of the new constitution proposed, almost immediately passed a measure, which was familiarly styled by the people the 'Hou jou smoel law.' The literal translation of this term is 'Hold your jaw.' In brief, it was an act which made it high treason for any man to discuss the question of either confederation or annexation.

I come to the conclusion, then, that the cause of the annexation was England's historical greed of territory, especially rich territory; and that, however unworthy the motive on the part of the visiting power, the Boers did not at that time receive the visitor with other feelings than those of satisfaction, and practically surrendered their country voluntarily and gladly to the rule of a greater power, under the impression that Sir Theophilus Shepstone would be permitted to carry out, and that he therefore would carry out, the promises he made them. As the programme was open before them, they had everything to gain and nothing to lose, except the loss entailed by nominal government by the British. No man, whether Boer or Britisher, who was living in the Transvaal, or knew the feeling of the Boers at the time of the annexation, would in 1877 have given any other account of the feeling of the nation; and if I have formed too low an opinion of the motives of English statesmen at that time, and am not justified in attributing the annexation to greed instead of to the purer and nobler desire to protect England's colonies, or even the Transvaal itself, from the inroads of savages, then my excuse must be that the failure of England to send out at that time a force equal to the task of restraining those savages and maintaining peace has helped materially to lead me to the unwarrantable conclusion.

CHAPTER III.

DIRECT CAUSES OF THE WAR.

SIR THEOPHILUS SHEPSTONE began his reign well, and I believe would have ended it well if he had been allowed to continue in office. He abolished forthwith, as his first administrative act, the war tax, which was pressing with great severity upon the burghers at that time,—that is to say, on those who paid it,—and the abolition of that tax was the cause of general satisfaction throughout the Transvaal. The finances of the country were taken in hand; negotiations of a conciliatory nature were entered into with the natives, and everything promised to go smoothly. As I have pointed out already, nearly every official who held office under the old Government was invited to and did retain his appointment. Paul Kruger remained in the country, and demanded and was paid an increased salary for his services. Koetze, who was on his way to the Transvaal to take the post of Chief-Justice, was on his arrival offered the position of first puisne judge, and Jorrisen stayed at his post as Attorney-General. It is true that later on his services were dispensed with, and for this Sir Theophilus Shepstone has been freely blamed, for no better reason than that Jorrisen immediately on his dismissal became an agitator for the recision of the annexation. As a matter of fact, Judge Koetze was the primary cause of Dr. Jorrisen's services being dispensed with. He never lost an opportunity of representing the unfitness of Jorrisen for the post he held, and Koetze, although only appointed first puisne judge, was the only occupant of the Supreme Bench. Sir Theophilus Shepstone's promises for reform comprised one to make the judicial bench worthy of the name, by appointing additional judges. It was not till March 1880 that this promise was redeemed, by the appointment of D. Jacobus Petrus de Wet to the Chief-Justiceship. Meanwhile Koetze, though a very young man, acted as Chief-Justice of the territory, and his influence in that capacity for the removal of Jorrisen from the Attorney-Generalship was undoubtedly great. Jorrisen had been a minister of religion, but abandoned that calling for the more remunerative one of Attorney-General under the Republic. Whether he was fitted for his second vocation I do not know. He is certainly a very intellectual and shrewd man, being much older than Koetze. There probably was some little jealousy between them, or a want of harmony in their ideas; whatever was the cause, it is certain the Attorney-General and the judge were on unfriendly terms, and this was constantly demonstrated by unseemly disputes. The vacancy created by the dismissal of the Attorney-General was filled up promptly, and a sworn enemy of the British Government—an enemy who has made his enmity felt—was found in Dr. Jorrisen thereafter.

In the proclamation issued at the time of annexation by Sir Theophilus Shepstone was the following paragraph:—

'And I further proclaim and make known that the Transvaal will remain a separate government, with its own laws and Legislature, and that it is the wish of Her Most Gracious Majesty that it shall enjoy the fullest legislative privileges compatible with the circumstances of the country and the intelligence of its people. That arrangements will be made by which the Dutch language will practically be as much the official language as the English; all laws, proclamations, and Government notices will be published in the Dutch language; in the Legislative Assembly members may, as they do now, use either language; and in the courts of law the same may be done at the option of suitors to a cause. The laws now in force in the State will be retained until altered by competent legislative authority.'

In this there was a direct promise which Sir Theophilus Shepstone attempted to fulfil, but which never was fulfilled; and the violation of the promise, or the torturing of the words whereby the promise was rendered valueless in the eyes of the people, has been one of their chief grievances.

The very year that Sir Theophilus assumed the administratorship, he submitted to the Colonial Office his views on the subject of the legislative machinery necessary and desirable for the country. That despatch was promptly consigned to a pigeon-hole on its receipt at Whitehall, and no other action, I believe, was taken on it.

I see that Sir Bartle Frere, in an article on the Transvaal in the *Nineteenth Century*, states that the object of Sir Theophilus Shepstone's visit to England was to confer with the Ministry, and to afford Her Majesty's Government the information needful to draw up a constitution for the Transvaal. If that was the sole reason for the administrator's visit to England, the circumstance in itself is a little peculiar, and more peculiar still is the fact that during this absence Sir Owen Lanyon should have been permanently appointed to the office. Taking from a memorandum written by Sir Theophilus in London in 1879, on one of Sir Bartle Frere's despatches respecting the government of the Transvaal, the opening sentence, one would come to a very different conclusion to that arrived at by Sir Bartle Frere as to the cause of Sir Theophilus visiting England. The paragraph I refer to is this (in a memorandum, be it noted, written for the information of the Secretary of State for the Colonies): 'It was no doubt desirable that I should be away from the Transvaal when Sir Bartle Frere paid his visit to that country. I had not, however, been led in time to expect either that my absence had been arranged for, or that it was desired; the consequence of this was, that I had postponed writing or acting on many important questions until I should have had an opportunity of conferring upon them with His Excellency the High Commissioner.' It appears, then, that Sir Theophilus Shepstone expected he would return to the Transvaal, and as administrator have a hand in carrying out some of the schemes of Sir Bartle Frere, if not his own, for the government of the territory. That never came to pass.

Returning to the subject of Sir Theophilus Shepstone's intentions in 1877, to give to the Transvaal, in accordance with the promise in his proclamation, a representative Legislature, and the contention I raise, that no notice was taken of his despatch by the home Government, even if Sir Bartle Frere is correct in saying that Sir Theophilus Shepstone went to England for the purpose of giving information to the Ministry, to enable them to draw up a constitution, there is still nearly eighteen months to be accounted for as an interval between Sir Theophilus Shepstone's recommendation and the date he was called on to 'supply information,' during which interval the home Government did practically nothing but come to the resolution to take further evidence in the matter. If it takes a Government eighteen months to come to such a weighty conclusion, one can form a vague idea of the time that will elapse before they act on the evidence.

What precisely were Sir T. Shepstone's proposals made in 1877 or the beginning of 1878, the Blue Book does not reveal. It is reported that, bearing in mind the somewhat singular freaks of the Volksraad of passing resolutions one day to cancel them the next, his recommendation was that the popular chamber should be controlled by an Upper House, in which Government nominees only would sit. Shepstone has been blamed for his 'inaction.' What more could he have done? With whom does the fault of the inaction lie? When a Government becomes hopelessly confused and embarrassed it casts about for a scapegoat. Sir Theophilus Shepstone was the one who had to do the duty of that unfortunate animal on this occasion. True, there was nothing amounting to censure cast on him, but he was 'withdrawn,' and his services dispensed with in a polite way. If an attempt to govern the Transvaal from Downing Street at the onset was a failure, or rather, if the Government of the territory did not bring in that revenue which would justify ministers in pointing to the annexation as a successful financial scheme, the subsequent policy of experimenting on the country with other governors was a still greater mistake. But money had to be obtained somewhere. The calls made upon the Imperial Exchequer on behalf of the Transvaal alarmed Lord Carnarvon.

During Sir Theophilus Shepstone's administration a deputation proceeded to England, in accordance with the resolution of the Boer Executive Council, to appeal to Her Majesty for the restoration of the country to the burghers. Kruger and Jorrisen were the envoys, but they returned from their mission unsuccessful. In all probability that would have been their last effort in that direction, but for the substitution of Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Owen Lanyon for the first British administrator of the Transvaal. Sir Theophilus Shepstone undoubtedly was highly esteemed by the Boers; the best proof of that, perhaps, is to be found in the fact that, as recently as the year 1880, Joubert stated that the Boers would be willing to accept Shepstone as their President, granted certain reforms in the administration of the Transvaal of that time. Shepstone thoroughly understood the Boer character, and in this respect he resembled President Brand of the Free State. To converse in a friendly way with the people, no matter how humble the man; to be attentive to all their small conversation, in fact to 'hob-nob' with every comer who is a respectable burgher, is essential to the popularity of any administrator in the Transvaal, or ruler over the Dutch in this part of South Africa. The orthodox military man, somewhat pompous and a trifle haughty to inferiors, is the man of all others the Boer will despise and hate. However clever, just, and impartial he may be matters nothing; if he assumes airs, or even if it is natural to him to carry his head proudly, he will never be a favourite with the Boers: they must be spoken to as one friend speaks to another; lofty manners and speech raise their contempt, and fail to overawe them in the slightest degree. One of the secrets of Sir Evelyn Wood's successful negotiations with the Boers was that his manner pleased them; unassuming and plain-spoken, he commanded respect and admiration, without making the Boer leaders feel that he considered it an act of condescension to argue with them. Anything dictatorial in his tone would have made the Triumvirate abandon all idea of coming to terms. The Boers liked Sir George Colley, from what they saw of him on one of his visits to the Transvaal, because there was nothing pretentious about him. Sir Theophilus Shepstone undoubtedly was and is a favourite with the Boers: those who followed him,—not his manners but his work,—Sir Owen Lanyon, Sir Bartle Frere, Sir Garnet Wolseley, never were popular, and never could gain popularity amongst this people. Had Downing Street known anything about Boer character, neither of the three gentlemen last named would ever have crossed the border. It may seem a trifling argument to advance, but it is by no means a trivial one.

At this point in my narrative—the departure of Sir Theophilus Shepstone for England, and the severance of his official connection with the Transvaal—I would quote from a review written by Mr. Bird, an eminent colonist, on Mr. Statham's book, *Blacks, Boers, and British*, a paragraph referring to Sir Theophilus Shepstone, which my attention has been called to. Before doing so I should like to state that anything I have said in defence of Sir Theophilus Shepstone is merely the outcome of conviction, and not from any personal friendship for that gentleman, who is known to me only by sight. The one mistake he made in connection with the Transvaal was that of acting prematurely, if it was a mistake. He anticipated probably by a few weeks only a request of the Volksraad for the country to be placed under British protection. Mr. Bird thus comments on *Blacks, Boers, and British*: 'He (that is, Mr. Statham) asks his readers "to take ship to Natal," and any well-informed Natal colonist will instantly name "two who pushed on Sir Theophilus Shepstone to use his powers, who gave him financial support, and, in one case at anyrate, were decorated for services to themselves." . . . It is not the reader of his book only whom the writer invites to "take ship to Natal." He professes a wish that a Royal Commission should be sent to ascertain who were Sir Theophilus Shepstone's confidential advisers, and what was their personal relation to himself; who it was that took the financial matters of the Republic in hand, and persuaded the Cape Commercial Bank to stop the credit of the Republican Government. . . . Who it was that advanced money to Sir Theophilus Shepstone for the necessary public expenditure; who it was that prepared financial statements for the inspection of the official sent out from the Colonial Office, etc. . . . The "two" who, the writer says, would be instantly named, are found at once, upon inquiry, to be reduced to one; for though the plural or dual is still used in questions as to the culpability imputed, it is certain that one only was decorated, that one only had any financial reputation, that one only could have influenced a bank, that only the father-in-law of Mr. George Shepstone, who lies amongst the gallant dead of Isandhlwana, stood in any personal relation to Sir Theophilus Shepstone. The one indicated is a gentleman independent in circumstances, who had never purchased an acre of land in the Transvaal before April 1877; the annexation, therefore, could bring no accession of value to his possessions. After the annexation his acquisition of land was limited to an outlay of £700, so that if he tendered advice to the Special Commission on other than financial matters (and of this there is not a shadow of evidence), the counsel could not have been tainted by any lure of speculation. It is not the fact that he persuaded any bank to withhold its credit from the Republican Government, though in its utterly bankrupt position, if he had done so he would have deserved the thanks of the bank, and the blame of no one. It is quite true that the Republican treasury having been found to contain 12s. 6d., and the liabilities of the Republic being large, whilst not even nominal assets stood to its credit, he arranged for an advance of the sums required for carrying on the Government, until financial provision could be made by correspondence with England. It is also true that he assisted in ascertaining the public debt, and gave advice to Sir Theophilus Shepstone, as he had often before advised Colonial Governors elsewhere on matters of finance. For his great and unselfish services, he received the cross of St. Michael and St. George. That one in his circumstances, whether as to private fortune, social position, or recognised character, should, as is also insinuated, have opened a private letter not addressed to himself, is a fiction, and an utterly improbable fiction.'

In seeking for some light on this matter, I happened to come across a man intimate with every concern of the Transvaal prior to its annexation and since, and, moreover, a man who avows a strong personal enmity to Sir Theophilus Shepstone. Such a man would be one of the first to endorse any statement which would cast a reproach on Sir Theophilus Shepstone, but he assured me that the insinuation made—that on the personal staff of Sir Theophilus was found one gentleman who, knowing what was about to happen, bought up £1 bank notes of the Republic at 2s. 6d. each, their then actual value, for the purpose of receiving 20s. from the British Government a few weeks afterwards, when that Government should have taken over the liabilities of the Republic—was thoroughly groundless. And this is his authority for contradicting the statement. When Burgers was sworn in as President of the Transvaal, the £1 notes immediately rose to a current value of 10s., and within a few months they were at par. That Sir Theophilus Shepstone surrounded himself by his own 'creatures' in an unwarrantable manner, is also an insinuation open to gravest doubt. His staff, I believe, comprised Osborne, Haggard, Clarke, Fynney, Henderson, and Henrique Shepstone. The last mentioned (his son) and Henderson were the only men who stood in any relation to Sir Theophilus Shepstone; on the other hand, every member of the Republican Government was offered and (with the exception of Piet Joubert) accepted office from Sir Theophilus Shepstone.

The Boers have freely alleged that Sir Theophilus Shepstone threatened to let loose the Zulus upon them if they resisted his will, and they pretend to found that allegation on certain words he used in reference to the Zulu king, Cetewayo. In the *Staats Courant* of the 24th March 1877, the words of Sir Theophilus Shepstone are given thus: 'Look to the real state of affairs: Cetewayo is now virtually exercising sovereign power over ground belonging to this State. He bears you ill feeling, and he says that the people of this State murdered Dingaan. The British Government keeps him back from attacking you. Are you in a position to conquer him?' Is there a threat in that? No doubt Shepstone was equal to threatening the Boers with the force of British arms; that would have come in good time if the Boers had resisted and not welcomed and hailed the British as deliverers.

The agitation for the recision of the annexation really began in earnest when Sir Theophilus Shepstone was called away. The agitators naturally drew their own conclusions from the retirement of that functionary; and the advent of a stranger to the country was considered a favourable opportunity for reopening the campaign. At that time, too, the return of Messrs. Kruger and Joubert from England took place, and they wished to announce to the Boers the result of this the second mission; that in itself was sufficient cause for calling a mass meeting of the farmers.

Sir Bartle Frere, hearing of the proposal to hold a meeting on the 10th January 1878, near Pretoria, took the opportunity of commenting in a letter to Kruger and Joubert on the unalterable intentions of Her Majesty's Government not to give up the Transvaal, and to see justice done to all. He announced to the Boers also the object of his approaching visit to the country, viz. 'to ascertain what the people really desired for their better government, and to consider how their reasonable expectations in that respect might be fulfilled, so as to give them the utmost possible amount of independence and self-government compatible with the security and welfare of their neighbours in South Africa.' Here, then, at the outset Sir Bartle Frere inferentially admitted voluntarily to the Boers that the promises made at the annexation had been disregarded so far by Her Majesty's Government. The Boers needed no reminding of that breach of engagement owing to which, for over eighteen months, they had been without a representative House of Assembly, but the admission was nevertheless of service to them as an incontrovertible argument to lay before the country in proof of injustice done to it. Sir Bartle Frere's letter of introduction of himself to the Boer leaders also contained a promise, a promise that Her Majesty's Government would behave better in the future if the Boers would only condescend to inform him in what way they desired the behaviour to be changed. He therefore expressed a wish to meet and hear the Boer leaders and their friends.

Though the Boers up to this time had sufficient evidence, if needful, to prove that England's promises were not worth much, I doubt whether the feeling in favour of annexation was very widespread at this moment. The announcement that Sir Bartle Frere was coming to inquire into the grievances of the people, would naturally have a tendency to magnify the importance of their grievances, and foster a sense of injury. His expressed desire to meet them would arouse in many a curiosity to see and argue with him, and enlarge on the injustice which had been done the Republic; undoubtedly it encouraged many to join the proposed mass meeting who otherwise would not have troubled themselves about the affair. A visit from a representative of the Queen gave promise of a new interest to the people; to the leaders of the agitation the visit of Sir Bartle Frere would afford a good opportunity for demonstrating the magnitude of the movement in which they were engaged, of parading the thousands of malcontents which they claimed to have at their backs supporting them. The period was a particularly convenient one in the eyes of the malcontent Boer leaders to press their cause with redoubled vigour, because the Zulu difficulty was becoming serious, and one likely to hamper the English Government considerably. Before the Boer meeting was held, or Sir Bartle Frere could meet them, the Zulu war, with its first disastrous consequences to our arms began.

One would have thought that the opportunity offered of revenging themselves on their old enemies, the Zulus, would have been gladly embraced by the Boers of the Transvaal. Either they had had enough of fighting in their last campaign against Secocoeni, or else they acted on the advice of their leaders not to give any help to the English, for with the exception of the gallant Piet Uys, and a few other burghers, the Boers never offered to raise a hand against the common foe. It was currently reported at the time that the Boers declared, 'We will not assist the British Government unless our independence is restored to us'; and there can be very little doubt that that was one of the rules laid down for the guidance of the people by those who claimed to lead and direct them. Amongst the Boer leaders there were then, as there has always been since, a number of hot-headed, violent fellows, who used every endeavour to excite the people to deeds of violence against the British at this juncture. Kruger, Joubert, Pretorius, and the moderate men, required all the authority they possessed to counteract the influence of this section, which was composed of the most bumptious, bragging, swaggering, bullying crew, that could be found in the Transvaal. A similar element in 1843 came very near upsetting the proceedings of the Boer Volksraad in Natal, when negotiations for peace with the British were being considered: it was the fear of such men which made hundreds of Boers attend the mass meetings during the visit of Sir Bartle Frere to the Transvaal; it was their threats which made hundreds join in the last war against the British.

It was April before the High Commissioner could redeem his promise to visit and confer with the Boers. Previously, His Excellency had an interview with Piet Joubert in Maritzburg, and that circumstance was taken advantage of, on the return of Joubert to the Transvaal, to call a mass meeting of the Boers. This meeting was held on the 18th of March, at a farm called Kleinfontein, about thirty-six miles from Pretoria. At this assembly—probably for the first time—the language used towards England was threatening and boisterous at times. The Boers went to the meeting armed, and had reviews, parades, and sham fights to relieve the monotony of the proceedings. In a country like the Transvaal, where the population is so widely scattered, the congregation of a large number of the inhabitants at one given spot is an undertaking of no little magnitude, especially when the meeting is out in the open country, far away from any town or village. The Boers are passionately fond of an argumentative discussion; those who have the least, or no oratorical gift at all, delight in the exercise of that gift by others. The longer the deliberation the better; to deal with anything rapidly would shock them beyond measure. They will argue and discuss the most self-evident proposition, and dwell upon every complexion of it with the same earnestness and expenditure of time which they bring to bear on the purchase of a yard of print stuff or a pair of boots; and if you want to see a Boer in the throes of serious thought, you must watch him when he is shopping. The mass meeting has a natural attraction for these people; there they meet old friends, relations, and acquaintances, and can exchange opinions and greetings with their kindred, whom otherwise they would not encounter perhaps twice in a lifetime. Provision for the inner man has to be made, as well as sleeping quarters provided; and as the journey to the scene of the gathering will occupy in some cases four or five or ten days, and the duration of the meeting under no circumstances can be less than another four or five days, it is easy to understand that great preparation is needed, and a considerable weight has to be carried to the trysting-place. One ox-wagon amongst every three or four families is about the proportion found at one of these assemblies of the people; and the large, cumbrous vehicles, when drawn up in a square, form quite an imposing array, as the white canvas hoods on the wagons can be seen from a great distance.

The agitators had, long before deciding to hold this meeting, had proof given them of the weakness of 'the strong Government of England'; because in 1878, after the return of the first deputation from England, Sir Theo. Shepstone had issued a proclamation (11th March 1878), containing a warning to 'designing persons who had made the return of the deputation from Europe the occasion of creating and fostering agitation and alarm, by imposing upon the credulity and ignorance of the quietly-disposed inhabitants of the country; that all meetings convened, at which might be proposed, discussed, or passed any resolutions aiming to weaken, resist, or oppose the authority of the Government, would be unlawful, and would render those present at such meetings, and especially the conveners thereof, liable to punishment.' The threat implied in that proclamation was not—and could not have been, with the force under control—carried into execution; and, emboldened by that circumstance, the leaders of the agitation were now prepared to play their part with increased vigour and force, stimulated to it, in fact, by the very circumstance of the prohibition I have quoted.

The assembly at Kleinfontein, which is on the high road between Pretoria and Heidelberg, was made as imposing as possible. It was called a public meeting; but the Boers took every precaution against strangers, or those who were not of their way of thinking, attending, and their demeanour altogether created a scare amongst the people in Pretoria. The new Administrator, Sir Owen Lanyon, was at this time in office, and he seems to have shared the apprehension of Englishmen in the Transvaal, that serious consequences might follow the proceedings, although convinced that a great number of those present at the meeting were brought there against their will and sympathies by intimidation. At this stage of the agitation the leaders were known as the People's Committee, of which Mr. Pretorius was the chairman; and the Committee on this occasion asked the people for definite instructions. Piet

Joubert put it to the meeting, after reporting the result of his interview with Sir Bartle Frere at Port Maritzburg, in this way: 'Do you wish to submit or do you wish the Committee to go on with its work, and persist even unto death if necessary?' On the day following the laying down of this plain issue, Mr. A. Vorster, one of the Committee, presented a document containing the opinion that the independence of the country should be demanded, and that the demand should be enforced if necessary. The *Volksstem* newspaper, which step by step supported the action of the agitators, reported (and this is a significant fact, as demonstrating that at this time there was not one common thought and resolve amongst the assembled Boers) that the proposal of Mr. Vorster was received with cries of assent *and dissent* ('the first predominating'). As proof also of the allegation that there was a considerable rowdy element amongst the gathering, it is only necessary to cite the reproof which Piet Joubert publicly administered on the third day of the meeting; and the words of J. S. Joubert, senior (one of the Committee,—'It is easy enough to cry "Yes, yes," here; but will you act up to that word?'), leave no room for doubt that the leaders at this time were uncertain of the feeling of those who were present in the nominal capacity of followers.

Sir Owen Lanyon made an effort to allay the progress of the danger by meeting a deputation of the Boer leaders. All he could learn was that the Boers simply wanted independence. The Boers say that Lanyon answered, he could not comply with their wishes without the sanction of the Secretary of State. Sir Owen Lanyon himself declares that to be a mis-statement, and that his reply was that he could not hold out any hope that their request would be granted. Unfortunate it was that Sir Bartle Frere had not been able up to this time to fulfil his promise to visit the people. Evidently it was regarded as an intentional violation of an engagement; at all events, Piet Joubert regarded it, or pretended to regard it, in that light, for he used these words to the assembly: 'The High Commissioner again speaks of his intention to visit the Transvaal. The same thing has been stated since the last deputation went to England; but as yet he has not paid his visit, and I (Mr. Joubert) do not believe His Excellency will come before he is backed by such a force that he can say "I will" and "I can." I do not believe His Excellency will come to restore the independence of the country.'

These expressions came to the ears of Sir Bartle Frere; and when, on the 10th April, he, in company with Sir Owen Lanyon, repaired to the Boer camp, the first thing he did was to point out to Pretorius the impropriety of casting such reflections upon his good faith. On his road up country the High Commissioner was repeatedly interviewed by Boers living on the route, who complained of the terrorism and threats of violence used to induce men to attend the mass meeting, and of this Sir Bartle Frere complained to the leaders or Committee. They were careful at that time to assert prominently that they were not leaders, or responsible in any way for the acts of the Boers; they were not even representatives, so they said, but merely spokesmen. Sir Bartle Frere's conviction that the Boer meeting was not an independent one, was confirmed by addresses of congratulation and expressions of confidence in his policy, and that of the Imperial Government, presented to him at every town he passed through on his way to Pretoria. At the several interviews His Excellency had with the Boer leaders (as I must call them in spite of their disclaimer), he endeavoured to get from them a statement of what they required, short of complete independence; but all the talk on the one side came to this, 'We want nothing more or less than independence'; on the other, 'That you can't have, and it is useless to persist in the request.'

The way the Boer spokesmen represented matters to Sir Bartle Frere was this: 'Suddenly, without any preparation, without any cause given on our part, when we were in temporary difficulties in suppressing a rebellious chief, Secocoeni, and when we had succeeded in bringing him to peace, it pleased Sir Theophilus Shepstone to avail himself of our temporary difficulties to take our State by stealth and to murder our liberty.'

The High Commissioner tried to argue the point with them, by putting the question, 'What do you mean by independence?' He evidently hoped to turn the argument into a side issue, but the only answer he could get was, 'We want the Sand River Convention observed.' Sir Bartle Frere then spoke to them in very plain terms. In order to guard against misrepresenting him, it may be well to quote the words he used. 'I will,' said the High Commissioner, 'tell you what occurs to me on the subject, but I must say that I am disappointed that you don't speak out more plainly, and say what you wish me to do. You know that I am Her Majesty's High Commissioner, sent out here to see that all her colonies in South

Africa are defended from infringement, and from being assaulted by any enemy. I have come up here unattended, because I do not wish to have any other weapons than those of reason and right with me. I think you have made some great mistakes, and that you have got into a very dangerous position by bad advice, and I should be very glad if any knowledge or experience that I have, or any power which the Queen has given me, can help you out of that position, and enable you to get what I consider is meant by independence. I am afraid that I and some of you may not exactly agree as to what is right and what is freedom, and what is independence, and so you must pardon me, as you do not say much on the subject yourselves, if I repeat to you what you, perhaps, already know. We come of the same stock, one of the most honoured stocks of all white men. We hold the same religion, and hope to be guided by the same Word of God; but, of course, different men see things with different eyes, and therefore, if I am tedious in telling you what you already know and have already felt, I hope you will excuse me. The first thing that I was assured before I came up here was that the whole of the people were unanimous on this matter. I never, till I came to the Transvaal, had any reason to doubt, if your delegates and some of the public prints were to be believed, but that the burgher population were all united in this matter. But many gentlemen from different parts have told me since I entered the Transvaal that you are not unanimous, so I took a good deal of pains to inform myself on this subject, and the result has been this, that unless very few of those gentlemen spoke the truth, the press has been entirely misinformed and misled as to the numbers and unanimity of those who take part in this movement. I had not entered the Transvaal before I was met by people from the Transvaal telling me this; and all the way along, I have never passed a single day without meeting a number of Dutch burghers who told me that they had not taken part in this movement. I asked them no questions—they volunteered the information themselves. I have had a man rush into my bedroom and ask me in Dutch, whether the Government intended to do such a thing as to give back the Transvaal. He said that he and all his neighbours were opposed to this movement. I have had men from wagons outspanned in the veld riding up to speak to me on the road: all these were Dutchmen, recollect, not Englishmen—good Dutch farmers, respectable men—and this every day without exception along my road. They told me they did not want the old Government again, that they only wanted a good firm Government, that they had prospered since the annexation, and did not wish it to be undone. Again, I found without any exception, in every farmhouse I entered, evidence of the intimidation used to make people join this meeting. I tell you what I saw and heard myself every day since I came into the Transvaal. Now, gentlemen, you know that a great many people abstain from telling you the truth: but if I am cut into pieces, nobody shall get anything but the truth out of me. Women have come to me, and said, "There is my poor husband out there in the camp; I hope they will soon send him home." "Why did he go into the camp?" "Because they threatened to shoot him, to cut him into pieces and make biltong of him; and am I to sit quietly in my house, while my goodman is there?" And this was also told me by women, wives and mothers of Boers, good men and true, who said they could not sleep safely in their beds. Men have come to me and said, "Give me notice if you are going to give the country up, and I will leave it." Thus I find that not only was violence threatened to men to bring them,—and you know that this is true,—but you pitch your camp close to the road and pull up travellers. And this you have done, not the leaders and the elders, but foolish young fellows who may get into fatal quarrels with somebody who may pass this way. I have found men, who have made contracts for telegraph poles, unable to perform their contracts, because intimidated and carried off to the camp. Now I will tell you why I mention these things to you, because I know that generally burghers do not study the law. But there are men among you who know the law sufficiently well to tell you what is the consequence of acts like these; that fine and imprisonment for doing what has already been done is the legal punishment; and that if by chance some foolish fellow were to let off a gun and shoot somebody, it might be much more serious for all concerned in bringing such people together. And it is my duty to tell you what is the real truth about this. You know very well that this is not liberty, this is not independence. I will tell you what are my ideas about independence. One is that men should have free power to meet together and discuss political matters; but you cannot have that if there is a single man in the assembly who is compelled to go against his will, and I am very well assured that a great number of those collected together are not there with their own free will and consent, and that if you gave them leave, a great number would go to their homes at once. Now, a great reason for saying this is, that you have got about 2000 men together, so far as I can make out, and you call them the people of the Transvaal. You know very well you are not agreed on this matter, and if I were to take the men away one by one from their fellows, I should get many of them to say they would not wish the annexation undone. Now you say, "You are not leaders, but the people themselves"; but remember, when the law begins to assert itself, it will not inquire about Voorloopers and wagon-drivers, it will ask who are the substantial farmers who brought these men together. And then, if I have to tell the truth, I shall have to say that there were many good men who were misled by foreigners and others, and that they have been made to do what is illegal by bad advice. Now I know who is one of those advisers, and I will tell you what I know of him. He was a rebel in England, and he betrayed his fellows; he came out to South Africa, and here he was tried for murder,—and this is one of the men who is at this moment advising part of the press and a great number of people in this country. Now, if you prefer being advised by such people to listening to what I have to say, I can say nothing further. I can only tell you what is my idea and what is in my power. You consider that the annexation of two years ago should be undone. Now, I have no authority to go back beyond the time that this country became a portion of Her Majesty's dominions. You know very well that it was not Sir Theophilus Shepstone who put an end to the Republic. You know very well that it was men among yourselves, not good burghers such as I see before me now, but men from foreign parts, who put an end to the Republic. You know very well that what I say is true. There are men before me who have borne high office in this country, and they know its difficulties. You called in a man, Mr. Burgers, and made him as far as possible supreme, and he brought in a number of people who were not Africanders, not farmers, to assist him in the government. I should like to know if that is the sort of thing you want back again? What I understand by freedom and independence is, first of all, freedom of speech. Now I doubt if you had that before, or if you have it now in your camp. I know that in the Cape Colony and in England every man may speak what he likes, and he may do what he likes, as long as he keeps within the law. Is it freedom when a man may not speak what is in his heart? Then there must be with freedom protection for life and property; and is there that when people threaten to shoot others and make biltong of them for not attending a political meeting? And then is it essential that men should have the franchise, that all those who pay taxes should have a voice in making their own laws? Now all these things, which make up what I call independence, I can give you. I can promise you that these shall be the objects of any Constitution that is made for the Transvaal; that you shall be able to go where you please, to say what you please, and do what you please—all within the law; that you shall be protected in your lives and property while you obey the law; and that you shall have the power to make your own laws with reference to everything within the province. That is what I am able to promise you; and I ask you to inquire of others who know me better than you do, whether I ever promise what I did not intend to perform. I know it is not difficult to carry out this self-government, as I have seen in the Cape Colony how possible and easy it is. There your brethren, your friends and relatives, have achieved all these objects during the last twenty years, with the perfect consent and goodwill of the British Government. You have doubtless heard in the old times, before the Voortrekkers started, what an oppressive Government there was at the Cape. There was protection to life and property, but there was no freedom of speech, of the press, or of the franchise. They had the old despotic system they got from the Dutch. But gradually men like our friend Mr. Kruger, with a good head and good tongue, and Mr. Pretorius, proved to Her Majesty's Government that they were fit for self-government, and they have received it most fully. There was, as you know, a good deal of agitation, but in place of there being any reluctance on the part of Her Majesty's Government to give them self-government, the whole power of the English Government was required to get the Colony at large to accept it. You know that it was only carried by a single vote at last. Well, what has been the result? That at this present moment they govern themselves even more entirely than Englishmen govern themselves in England. I am the only representative of the Queen out there, and Mr. Kruger will remember that, when on his way to England, I requested him to go into the House of Assembly in Cape Town, and hear how they were discussing the conduct of the Governor, and whether they would recommend Her Majesty's Government to recall him. After a fortnight's discussion, having fully satisfied themselves, they gave me their full confidence, and approved of what I had done. Well, who were these men? They were said not to be fit for self-government, but I feel confident in saying that they are perfectly fit to govern themselves; and they are your own relations. All I ask for is, that you should do what has been done in the Cape. The same coat never fits two men alike, and the same Constitution never exactly fits two countries, and what I should wish is that you would only speak out, and say how much you would want of the same self-government. You must remember that it is under the Queen's Government that you are able to assemble in that camp. *If some were in power who wish to be, do you think you could come and talk about what you please out there?* If you mean by independence *the old Republic back again*, then I have no power whatever to give you anything of the kind. Messrs. Kruger, Joubert, and Jorissen have been themselves to England, and they *have themselves heard* from the Queen's own *Ministers* the determination of the English people in this matter. Some people have got it into their heads that we are in difficulties in Zululand, and would be very glad to throw up the Transvaal. And now I should like them to tell you whether they themselves would think it honourable for us to give up those who have thrown in their lot with us? There have been some field cornets who have been "running with the hare and hunting with the hounds"; but there are others who have done their duty honestly and bravely; and do you really think that men of the same blood as yourselves would give up men who have been threatened to be made biltong of, and that their wives and children should be hunted out of the country? I believe my own countrymen would rather die first! I believe I spoke to you before about treating with native tribes to incite them to rise. I have got the names of some of those who are accused of this; and I am glad the name is not that of any man I have yet seen; and I need not tell you that I firmly believe those before me would kick out any man from their midst who did so behave. I do not believe they would countenance him for one minute; but I tell you this in order to warn you of the danger you incur of being mixed up with men whom you do not trust yourselves. *I believe that some of the newspapers state that a change has come over the people of England, and that they would be very glad to give the Transvaal up.*

I advise you, as your friend, not to believe one word of it. The reason given for taking over the Transvaal was that it was badly governed, and paved the way for foreigners to come in and set up a foreign government in this country. These reasons have been given, and do you suppose for one moment that the people of England would be so cowardly as to take the country and not make an attempt to govern it well? *to throw over all the men who have stuck by us, and to give up the country to be torn to pieces as factions please? Never believe that the people of England will do anything of the kind.* They will strive honestly to give this country the best government they can—as good a government as they have themselves, and they will ask you to do nothing that they do not do themselves. There are a great many other fables I have heard put about by interested people as to what the Government will do; that they will commandeer the young men, commandeer wagons, that your lands will be taken away, etc. There is not a word of truth in this. I told Mr. Joubert when in Maritzburg that there was a great opportunity before the Transvaal. Its people could have helped their brethren bordering on Zululand when in distress. That was said in the interest of the Transvaal, not of Great Britain. *You may be sure* such a request will not now be repeated. I will not ask you again for assistance against the Zulus; by the blessing of God, the reinforcements now come will enable us to crush the resistance of the Zulu people. *I hope to see the military system of the Zulus put down*; and you may be sure that if the troops we have are not able to do it, more will come. And so far as I can help it, there will be no dishonourable peace. This matter is in the hands of the Almighty, but I hope to show that there will be no difference in what I say now and will then say. What I want to give you now is a government as in the Cape Colony and in England, with no sovereign but the law, and the Crown as the representative of the law.'

Much more in this strain was said by the High Commissioner, but the Boer leaders always returned to the charge, and at last His Excellency became impatient. Joubert was particularly tenacious of the point contended for, and bothered Sir Bartle Frere to no small degree with one of his replies to the argument of the Commissioner.

'I should mislead your Excellency,' remarked Joubert, 'if I said that the people of the Transvaal would be content with anything short of their independence. All the independence as defined in the Cape Colony and England is understood by the people who have chosen their sovereign, or voluntarily stand under that sovereignty, and unlike us, who have never consented to such sovereignty. A slave, however kindly treated, desires his liberty, and will exchange for such slavery freedom, even though it might entail great misery. We bought this land with our property and our blood, and when we got the country we could never believe that Her Majesty's Government would repudiate our right, but acknowledge that the circumstances under which this country was annexed a stain brought upon Her Majesty's name; and would she wipe it with our blood? And we are willing to be ground and crushed than to suffer oppression and injustice. We will rather perish by the sword of the Zulu, or Makatee, or any other barbarian in the world, than suffer injustice in our own country, just as any Englishman would.'

The answer of the High Commissioner was unfortunate; it sealed his reputation with his Dutch auditors, and impressed them unfavourably. He had come out to meet them for the express purpose of discussing matters with them; he had initiated the argument, and when they puzzled him, and he failed to convince them, he got angry, and declined to listen. His Excellency replied, and I am quoting the words from his own official report: 'Mr. Joubert, I think we have had enough of this tall talk. You must know that it is pure nonsense this talk of being a slave. *You have not*, *from first to last*, *from the time* you first returned from England till now, said anything practical as to what the Queen's Government can do. You have kept on repeating, "We will have our independence"; and when I ask you what your independence is, you answer, "*Giving back our independence as at the annexation.*" You speak about the Sand River Convention, or things that happened before the Republic was in existence. It is impossible to expect that I shall get any good advice out of such talk, and show what I really feel, my entire sympathy with this people, and my desire that the Queen's orders should be carried out, and that you should get every freedom or liberty which you can possibly have. It is no use talking of slavery when you know very well it does not apply to you. We are all here free men, but also practical men, and instead of talking of slavery, we ought to speak about how we are to be self-governed. There are some of the older men whom I should like to hear.'

The 'older men' spoke very much to the same purpose; and Sir Bartle Frere parted with them, after promising to forward a memorial they had drawn up to England, and uttering the following words of warning: 'You, all of you, have got some lawyer or agent whom you trust; I would entreat you to inquire of anyone who knows the law better than I do, for I am not a lawyer, who will be responsible if any breach of the law is committed, or results from what has passed, and ask him how many years it is before the effects of whatever may be done are forgotten. I am quite ready to intimate that up to this day nothing that may have been done will subject anyone to penalties of any kind. The only offence which I consider to be one which cannot be forgiven is the inviting natives to take part against white men. I have told you, gentlemen, that I do not for one moment mix you up in any such proceedings, and therefore there is nothing that has happened that can, to my mind, cause you any anxiety. I shall always do full justice to the courage and the prudence with which the Committee have managed affairs at the camp hitherto, and I only hope that the same prudence may rule their proceedings hereafter.'

The Boers drew up their memorial. It contained the stock arguments that 'craft, deceit, and threats had been used by Sir Theophilus Shepstone,' besides the following paragraph quoted, after setting forth in detail their grievance of being robbed of their independence:—

'Three years ago it was the South African Republic that intimated its readiness to attend a conference for the purpose of discussing common interests in South Africa, which was invited by Lord Carnarvon, in order to discuss confederation. Two years ago our Volksraad resolved as stated above, and in the name of the people of the South African Republic we solemnly repeat the assurance, in everything that can conduce to the unity and welfare of the several States in South Africa we will co-operate now and ever. In conclusion, should your Majesty have any doubt whether we actually represent the very great majority, *we are happy to state to your Majesty that nothing would please us better than to have this decided by the votes of the burghers.* Must it then, your Majesty, come to war? It cannot be your will, just as it is not our wish.

Your Majesty cannot desire to rule over unwilling subjects. Unwilling subjects but faithful neighbours we will be. We beseech you, put an end to this unbearable state of things, and charge your High Commissioner in South Africa to give us back our State.'

The Boer leaders at this time were not yet confident of the feeling of the camp, much less of the whole of the burghers of the Transvaal. In spite, therefore, of a refusal twice uttered to two deputations from the Transvaal by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the confirmation of that verdict by Sir Bartle Frere, the people were persuaded by the leaders that another appeal might be made to England. In reality, I believe the agitators were convinced long ago in their own minds that the country would not be restored to its independent state, but some measure of free institutions might be conceded, and the sending home of a memorial meant a gaining of time, during which it was hoped the agitation would spread. The presence of so many British troops in Natal and in Zululand, where the power of Cetewayo was rapidly being broken, made a resort to arms inadvisable and inexpedient at that moment. The Boers made it a grievance, which they set forth in their memorial to the Queen, that Pretoria should have been put in a state of defence by Sir Owen Lanyon during their assembly. An armed insurrection the leaders dare not advocate, although they had repeatedly expressed their opinion that now all hope of justice being obtained by peaceful means was gone. The memorial to the Queen would serve to temporize until circumstances were more favourable for open rebellion, if necessary, and the people were found willing to take such a view.

Sir Bartle Frere cannot be accused of acting on his own preconceived opinions as to the true feeling of the Boers in the Transvaal. His preconceived opinion was that the Boers were unanimous amongst themselves. His first journey in the country convinced him of his error, and he frankly told the Boer leaders so. The new opinion he formed was strengthened day by day the more he saw of the farmers *privately* after the mass meeting had broken up. In a despatch to the Colonial Office of 6th May, he stated:—

'We have learnt much in communication with the people as we passed through the country, not a day having passed when we did not meet many farmers who, when freed from the restraints of the crowd, would speak out very frankly and fully their opinions regarding the administration of the British Government, and their own wants and wishes.

'A very large proportion, I should say a very decided majority, when thus speaking alone their own individual sentiments, by no means desired the annexation should be undone; and a very large number, including some of the most substantial and industrious, declared their intention of selling their farms and quitting the country if the British Government withdrew.

'But with the exception of a very few, who were already committed to extreme opinions, all whom we met considered that the first requisite for future quiet and good government is an unmistakeable declaration by the British Government as to its fixed intention whether it will or will not withdraw from the Transvaal.

'It will doubtless surprise Her Majesty's Government, that, after all that has passed, and after my late very emphatic statements on the subject, there should be any real doubt on this point in the minds of the people in the Transvaal; but it must be borne in mind that they have a long experience of promises and expectations held out by the ruling powers, comparatively few of which have been fulfilled. All the older men remember the throwing off of the Orange Free State and Transvaal by the British Government, in the former case, at least, contrary to the wishes of a great majority of the people. The hopes of firm, vigorous, and progressive government which we re-entertained at the time of the annexation, have been but imperfectly fulfilled; the mode in which mass meetings and protests have been dealt with has enabled agitators to persuade large multitudes that the objects of their agitation are not hopeless of attainment, and especially since the meeting at Wonderfontein early in January the leaders have assumed a more defiant and peremptory tone, and have ventured more openly to threaten all who did not join them.'

Convinced of the necessity of England carrying out some of the promises made at the time of the annexation, if the spirit of Joubert, Kruger, Pretorius, and others was to be prevented from spreading, and particularly of the advisability of superseding the autocratic character of administration by a Government of a more liberal form, Sir Bartle Frere brought into existence forthwith an Executive

Council. This was to be composed of the heads of the more important departments of the administration, with the addition of three non-official members, chosen by the administrator from among the landed proprietors or men of business in the province.

As regarded the promise of representative institutions, Sir Bartle Frere feared in the then state of the country to do more than propose, for the approval of Her Majesty's Government, a scheme which would make the Executive Council of the Transvaal, *plus* the Chief-Justice and six additional members (either official or non-official, according to the will of the Administrator), the Legislative Council of the Transvaal. Distinctly he laid it down that this was only a tentative proposal, just as was the other scheme of administrative reform he initiated; for he was convinced that the Boer population had not shown any incapacity for legislation. A year and a half at the least, he anticipated, must elapse before a decision could be arrived at as to the Constitution which would permanently satisfy the needs and aspirations of the people, and parliamentary sanction be obtained for such a Constitution.

Sir Bartle Frere's proposals could hardly have reached the Colonial Office before the decision had been arrived at there, to confine the duties of Sir Bartle Frere to the Cape Colony, and to give Sir Garnet Wolseley the chief civil (as well as military) command over the eastern portion of South Africa. The home Government hoped thereby to kill two birds with one stone. He was to bring the Zulu war to a close, to put a stop to the incipient Boer rebellion, and set everything right which had all the appearance of being wrong and unsatisfactory in that quarter just then.

Here was fresh hope for the agitators in the Transvaal. Might not Sir Garnet take a different view of the question to what Sir Bartle Frere had? The keynote of Sir Garnet's instructions was 'economy.' Everything to be sacrificed to economy is the order when the British taxpayer is getting uneasy in his mind and the majority of the Government in power is imperilled.

This is what the new Civil Commissioner immediately on his arrival wrote to Colonel Lanyon:—

'GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PIETERMARITZBURG,
NATAL, *June* 29, 1879.

'SIR,—I have the honour to transmit to your Excellency a copy of a telegram which I have this day sent you through Colonel Bray.

'I have heard, as you will gather from the tenor of this telegram, with much uneasiness, of the large outlay of public money which your Excellency has been incurring, and I sincerely trust that since the receipt of my telegram you have been able to take measures which will ensure a very substantial limitation of the heavy pecuniary liabilities that, it appears to me, would have been incurred by the Transvaal Government under the plans your Excellency was adopting.

'I propose now to take the field in Zululand without delay, and I shall feel much obliged if, until I am able to visit the Transvaal territory, you will comply with the instructions contained in my telegram, and will exert yourself in every way to further the system of economy which appears to me to be now urgently demanded.—I have, etc. 'G. J. Wolseley.

'His Excellency Colonel Lanyon, Transvaal Territory.'

Without any inquiry whatever as to the necessities of the case, this fiat went forth. It is characteristic of the administration of a colony from afar. Sir Garnet Wolseley was yet far off.

The Boer leaders pretended to be grievously disappointed in Sir Bartle Frere. They complained that directly he went away from their mass meeting, and after promising to submit the wishes of the 'People's Committee' for the serious consideration of the home Government at Potchefstrom and other towns he visited, he publicly stated that those who feared the country would be given back need not be uneasy, because it would not happen. If Sir Bartle Frere disappointed and grieved the leaders of the agitation, Sir Garnet Wolseley, by his vain threats and high-handed action, increased the volume of discontent tenfold, and did more to stir up a spirit of hostility to the English, and add to the ranks of malcontents, than can be told. There were now two essentially military men who had to deal with the Transvaal; both Colonel Lanyon and Sir Garnet Wolseley despised the Boer race, and despising them, did their best to bring matters to a head, in fact to test the Dutch courage to see if there was the shadow of anything but wordy warfare in these malcontents.

Now for the first time were taken active steps to restore order and loyalty. As an example of the way this was to be accomplished, take the following affidavits forwarded in July of the same year (1879) by Colonel Lanyon to Sir Garnet Wolseley, and an accompanying letter, in which the Administrator mentioned that the Attorney-General had 'initiated proceedings against the offending parties at Wakkerstroom, and I will take precautions to prevent any further opposition to the orders of the Landdrost' (*i.e.* magistrate):—

'William Robertson Keet, advocate and attorney, residing at M. W. Stroom, maketh oath and saith:

'I was present in the Landdrost Court at M. W. Stroom on the 12th June 1879, when the preliminary examination was held in "*Re* the Queen *versus* Mr. J. Van Renseberg," and sat during that time in a seat next to Mr. D. C. Uys, J.P., commonly called Zwart Dirk; and when the statement by the accused was made: "I protest against this, according to the protest signed by me and still acted upon by our Committee, and I abide by this protest, by which we have resolved to remain quiet and silent, and not to obey the laws of any party until the result of the protest has decided what Government is the master here, then we shall be obedient to that Government," or words to that effect, I distinctly heard the aforesaid Mr. D. C. Uys say, "That is right, that's right; yes, that is good." I am under the impression that I mentioned this subsequently both to the Landdrost and public prosecutor, but am not positive that I mentioned it to the Landdrost.

'W. R. KEET.'

'Christoppel H. Hoffman, Landdrost's clerk and public prosecutor for the district of Wakkerstroom, maketh oath and saith:

'I have no recollection whatever of having been informed by Mr. W. R. Keet, or any one else, of Mr. D. C. Uys, J.P., having used the expression, "That is right, that's right; yes, that is good," on Mr. H. M. Janse *v.* Renseberg having made his statement in court at the close of the preliminary examination on the 12th instant.

'Until last evening, when I heard it from Mr. Keet, in the presence of the Landdrost, Mr. Keet is either in error when he states that he has informed me of this before, or I did not understand him.

'Nor did I hear Mr. D. C. Uys say these words in Court.

'C. H. HOFFMAN.'

'Sworn before me this 25th day of June 1879.

'T. S. HUTCHINSON, Landdrost.'

Sir Garnet Wolseley having 'settled' the Zulu country, proceeded to Pretoria to 'settle' the Transvaal. He in turn recognised the fact that two and a half years had elapsed since Her Majesty extended her authority over the territory, and yet no steps had been taken to fulfil the pledges given by Sir Theophilus Shepstone. Sir Garnet Wolseley in turn, just as had the first and the second Commissioners of Her Majesty in the Transvaal, saw the necessity for an Executive Council and a Legislative Council. As to the Executive Council, that must be provided off-hand without delay; the voice of the people, the Legislative Council, was of second importance; by and by he would make his proposals to the Government at home as to what should be done in that respect. Five official and three non-official members formed the Executive which by proclamation, anticipating instructions from England, Sir Garnet Wolseley created. The appointment of the non-official members rested in the hands of the Government, and £300 per annum was allowed each one as an equivalent for expenses incurred in travelling in the discharge of his duties as a member of the Council. A clause in this proclamation, directed at the non-official members, contained the following proviso:—

'No business shall be brought before the Executive Council except by the Governor or Lieutenant-Governor, or other officer for the time being administering the government of this territory, or by the member for the occasion presiding; but any member of the Executive Council may in the said Council address to the Governor, or Lieutenant-Governor, or other officer for the time being administering the government of this territory, or to the member for the occasion presiding, a statement in writing upon any matter which he deems worthy of the consideration of the Council.'

Simultaneously Sir Garnet Wolseley, having received from Mr. Pretorius, the chairman of the People's Committee, a letter asking for some signification of Her Majesty's decision in regard to the memorial of the Committee forwarded through Sir Bartle Frere in April, issued another proclamation which 'he felt assured was well calculated to set at rest all disturbing doubts regarding the maintenance of Her Majesty's sovereignty.' It was in these terms:—

'Whereas it appears that, notwithstanding repeated assurances of contrary effect given by Her Majesty's representatives in this territory, uncertainty or misapprehension exists among some of Her Majesty's subjects as to the intention of Her Majesty's Government regarding the maintenance of British rule and sovereignty over the territory of the Transvaal; and whereas it is expedient that all grounds for such uncertainty or misapprehension should be removed once and for all beyond doubt or question: Now, therefore, I do hereby proclaim and make known, in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, that it is the will and determination of Her Majesty's Government, that this Transvaal territory shall be and shall continue to be for ever an integral portion of Her Majesty's dominions in South Africa.

'And I do hereby, in the name of Her Majesty, charge and require all Her Majesty's subjects in this territory, or elsewhere, and all others whom it may concern, that they do act and govern themselves accordingly.'

Here was a deathblow to all idea of receiving the concession asked for. Was this the answer to their memorial? But British troops were still around the country. At this time, however, a number of gentlemen at the Cape, including many members of the two Houses of Assembly, and representing the Conservative country party in the Old Colony, waited on Sir Bartle Frere, and suggested that it was desirable, in the interests of peace and good government in South Africa, that the government of the Transvaal should be settled upon some basis that would ensure permanent tranquillity to that country. With the view of ascertaining the real state of feeling among the inhabitants, the deputation suggested that 'a Convention should be summoned to discuss the question of the present and future position of the constitution, and that in the event of the majority being against the retention of British rule, the independence of the country should be restored under such guarantees as would ensure its future good government, and the maintenance of peaceful relations with its neighbours.'

This support of the cause of the malcontent Boers came when they most needed sympathy and help; for Sir Michael Hicks Beach wrote that Her Majesty had been pleased to issue letters patent strengthening the Executive Council for the Transvaal, and instituting some legislative machinery as proposed by Sir Bartle Frere, as the only admissible form, pending confederation, calculated to supply a direct expression of the views of the community. He added in this despatch to Sir Garnet Wolseley: 'I trust that the legislative powers thus provisionally conferred will be wisely used, and will be of much service during the period which may intervene before a more complete Constitution can be granted. You will not fail to impress upon the people the hope of Her Majesty's Government that this period may not be prolonged, and they should also clearly understand that the persistent opposition which the established Government of the country has received from many of the inhabitants has been among the principal causes which have precluded, for the present, the grant of any larger constitutional powers.'

The only important clauses in the letters patent regarding the Executive Council, are those here undercited :—

'The Governor shall, in the execution of the powers and authorities belonging to him, in all cases consult with the Executive Council, excepting only in cases which may be of such a nature that, in his judgment, our service would sustain material prejudice by consulting the said Council thereupon, or when the matters to be decided shall be too unimportant to require their advice, or too urgent to admit of their advice being given by the time within which it may be necessary for him to act in respect of any such matters. In all such urgent cases, he shall at the earliest practicable period communicate to the said Executive Council the measures which he may so have adopted, with the reasons thereof.

'The Governor shall alone be entitled to submit questions to the Executive Council for their advice or decision; but if the Governor decline to submit any question to the said Council, when requested in writing by any member so to do, it shall be competent to such member to require that there be recorded upon the minutes his written application, together with the answer returned by the Governor to the same.

'The Governor may act in the exercise of the powers and authorities belonging to him as Governor in opposition to the advice given to him by the members of the Executive Council, if he shall in any case deem it right to do so; but in any such case he shall fully report the matter to us, by the first convenient opportunity, with the grounds and reasons of his action. In every such case it shall be competent to any member of the said Council to require that there be recorded at length on the minutes the grounds of any advice or opinion he may give upon the question.'

It is obvious from the foregoing paragraphs that there could not arise much danger to imperial interests in a Council regulated by such restrictions; and as regards the Legislative Assembly, the same remark applies, looking at its constitution, clause xiii. :—

'The Legislative Assembly shall consist of the Governor, and of the following officers and persons, that is to say, the Administrator, the Chief-Justice of the Transvaal, the members of the Executive Council, and such other persons, not exceeding six in number at any one time, as the Governor may, at the beginning of each session of the Assembly, summon by any instrument under the seal of the province to be members of the said Legislative Assembly for the said session: Provided that of the persons so summoned at least three shall be burghers holding no office of profit under the Crown.'

Was this the full measure of representative institutions which Sir Theophilus Shepstone promised? To the Boers, one and all now, here was something obnoxious and hateful, and diametrically opposed to all their notions of representative Government. This express vote of want of confidence in the Boers by the Imperial Government, went a long way to dissatisfy and render discontented those who hitherto had not taken any part in the agitation for a restoration of independence. Those who had up to this moment been half-hearted partisans of the movement now became zealous in the cause of independence.

Before proceeding with the narrative, I should here, in justice to Sir Bartle Frere, call attention to a circumstance connected with his brief administration of the Transvaal, which he has noted, but of which there is no evidence in any of the Blue Books, so far as I have been able to ascertain. Writing in 1881 on the subject of the Boer rebellion, he states: 'It is now nearly two years since I expressed the conviction that no less a measure than self-government, controlled, as in the Cape and other colonies, by the Crown, would content the Boers, and that no less, with proper constitutional checks, and under the authority of the British Crown, should be granted to them. At that time I certainly never contemplated that a section of successful malcontents would be accepted as representing the whole population of the Transvaal. I then drew up the outlines of a Constitution, in which I was greatly assisted by the advice of the President of the Orange Free State, Mr. Brand; of the Chief-Justice of the Cape Colony, Sir Henry de Villiers; of the Prime Minister, Mr. Sprigg; and of the Attorney-General, Mr. Upington, and other Dutch and English gentlemen who knew the Boers thoroughly, and understood what was needed to give them a good and liberal form of government. The materials so collected were at the disposal of Her Majesty's Government, when I was superseded as regarded all authority in the Transvaal in June 1879.'

One of the laws passed in the Transvaal was modelled on that in force in Natal, as to the sale of gunpowder and firearms. The object of it is to prevent Kaffirs getting guns and ammunition; in Natal these precautions are ineffective. It is commonly supposed by the officials of the Government that the natives have not these weapons, but any one attending a bush hunt in the country, at which no magistrate or other official enters an appearance, will soon be enlightened on that point. The natives do not bring their guns openly and fearlessly; at the 'meet' you will see nothing but assegais and knob-kerrets carried by them; but once in the bush, when the drive begins, guns appear in the Kaffirs' hands in all directions. To obtain gun cartridges or powder, white men have to get a 'permit' from the magistrate in the first place; that must be exhibited to the storekeeper before the ammunition can be supplied. During the agitation of the Boers, the magistrates were very chary of granting permits to Dutchmen; in many cases permits were refused. Towards the latter end of 1879, parties of six and seven men at a time began a system of powder 'jumping.' Middleburg, Potchefstrom, and other towns where there were no soldiers, were visited. Entering the shop where powder was sold, they would put down the price of the ammunition they required, and demand it. When the storekeepers refused to serve them unless they had the usual permit, the intending purchasers would quietly help themselves. If any resistance was offered, they used just sufficient force to overcome it. In some cases they would remark, 'We don't want the ammunition, but take it to defy the Government.'

The feeling throughout the commercial community soon became general, that these proceedings were the beginning of a combined movement which would lead to serious results. Those Boers who were loyal to the English began to complain of the coercive attitude adopted towards them by the malcontents.

For the 10th of December a meeting of the Boers was again called by the leaders of the People's Committee. In consequence of this information reaching Sir Garnet Wolseley, he made military preparations, which he hoped would overawe the disaffected and strengthen the weak-hearted. Six companies of the 80th Regiment, and one troop of K Dragoon Guards, were stationed at the capital; one company of the 2d-21st Regiment, four of the 58th, three squadrons K Dragoon Guards, fifty mounted infantry and four guns, were brought to Heidelberg; seven companies of the 4th, and forty Frontier Light Horse, to Standerton; two companies 58th and forty mounted men, to Wakkerstroom; and one company of infantry at Limeberg, Utrecht, and Middleburg each; to the last-mentioned garrison being added one troop of K Dragoon Guards and a few Frontier Light Horse. This disposition of the available forces was ordered in November; by the time of the Boers' meeting, Sir Garnet hoped to have two companies of the 80th and six of the 2d-21st freed from operations against Secocoeni, and to be able to strengthen the Pretoria garrison with this additional force. The High Commissioner had not yet lost his temper over the matter, or even pretended to lose it: that was to happen later on. He therefore issued the following notice, addressed to the inhabitants of the Transvaal:—

'I am informed that it is the intention of a number of the inhabitants of the Transvaal to assemble together on the 10th December next for political purposes. In my opinion, there can be nothing more hurtful to the interests and welfare of the people than any attempt to unsettle their minds and disturb their allegiance by concerted occasions of public excitement, and I have reason to fear that certain designing and evil-intentioned persons are in this matter promoting an agitation by which many through timidity or ignorance may be betrayed into irrevocable trouble. I think it right that all people should be enabled to understand clearly the peril in which they may place themselves, and to realize beforehand the grave and disastrous consequences which may accrue to themselves and their families and their property through implication in the wrong-doing which too frequently arises out of meetings such as that which I am told is about to be held. I therefore deem it my duty earnestly to warn and remind all persons intending to take part in the meeting of the 10th December, that the laws of the South African Republic for the prevention and punishment of treason and sedition are in force in this territory, and all persons convoking or attending meetings for a treasonable purpose, or proposing or aiding in treasonable projects, or making use of treasonable words, or inciting or encouraging others to do any of these things, are guilty of offence against the law, and render themselves liable to heavy penalties.

'And I further give warning, that it is an offence against the law to use or attempt to use any force or coercion, or any influence in the nature of threats or intimidation, with the object of inducing persons to take part in, or to lend countenance or assistance to any meeting or any project whatsoever; and I desire it to be known, for the guidance of all the inhabitants of this territory, that it is my determination to extend the fullest protection of the law over any who may be threatened or coerced, and with this object I have given order that all cases wherein complaint is made, or evidence appears that any such improper and unlawful influence has been used, or that any attempt has been made to use it, shall be subjected to searching investigation; and if any charge is established against any person of using or attempting to use such improper and unlawful influence, I shall cause the offender to be dealt with strictly and without favour, according to law.'

That the English inhabitants of Pretoria were becoming alive to the necessity of something being done which would tend to allay discontent and cause for murmuring, is proved by the passing of resolutions at a large and influential meeting, urging on the High Commissioner the desirability, nay the absolute and imperative necessity, for the immediate granting of a Constitution, to the end that good government of the country might be secured by a fair representation of all classes and interests in the legislative chamber; that two puisne judges should be forthwith appointed (as provided by the Volksraad in its session of 1877) to the High Court, as at that moment one judge only composed the bench; and that the obligations accepted from the former Government of the South African Republic of constructing the Delagoa Bay Railway should be fulfilled.

At the same time the meeting passed resolutions expressing its satisfaction with the reiterated assurances that the act of incorporation of the Transvaal with the British Empire would not be rescinded. They went a step further, and this is perhaps the best proof afforded of the conviction that was forced on the minds of the English inhabitants of the rapid spread of feeling inimical to British rule amongst the Boers—the meeting pledged itself, in the event of the British Government seeing fit to annul the act of annexation, to adopt a form of Government and Constitution of its own, and uphold the same by force of arms if necessary. Much was made of this meeting at the time: its resolutions were sent to the Colonial Office, and throughout South Africa great prominence was given to it in the press. Prominence it deserves in these pages, because the proceeding, as regards the latter part, went a long way to foster race hatred between Boers and British. Those who attempted to speak against the policy which had been adopted by the English, were hooted down; consequently, at an early stage in the proceedings the malcontents left the room in a body amidst derisive cheers. The English inhabitants had come to look upon the Boers with increased contempt; their mass meetings and protests were scoffed at by the more ignorant section of the English community as 'gas'; while our troops were in the country, many would no doubt have liked to have seen an open collision, the result of which they hoped would be to settle this Boer business off-hand. The Boers resented bitterly this hostility of the urban element. During the late war they had many opportunities, and freely availed themselves of them, to pay off old scores contracted at this time. The *Volksstem* was not sparing, on the other side, in its condemnation of English policy, and from day to day spoke out freely and fearlessly. On the occasion when the new Executive Council was formed, this newspaper, after remarking that Sir Garnet came to put things right, but had gone the wrong way about it, added: 'It is clear our future Government, of Sir Garnet's creation, will be moulded in an absolutely autocratic groove. Shall we tell him—the great "I" who presumptuously disposes of the future—that as sure as he has declared the protest of the old Government to be a dead letter, so certainly will the inevitable consequences of his acts force him to declare also the annexation proclamation, with all the promises, to be a dead letter. He cannot appoint a *legal* Executive, as such an appointment rests, according to the provisions of the law, with the Volksraad, and not with the State. He will either have to do this or support his illegally-constituted Executive with the bayonet. We warn our readers, Boers as well as others, to be on their guard lest the last spark of liberty be taken from them, and we be bound hand and foot and delivered over to military despotism.'

Sir Garnet Wolseley's brusqueness had given great offence to the retrocessionists. His tone at the very outset made them hate him ten times more than they had hated Sir Bartle Frere; there was nothing conciliatory in his action, if we except the tone of his despatches to England. For an example of his method of asserting himself and his absolute authority, take his address to a deputation which waited on him at Wakkerstroom, in which occurred the memorable sunshine dictum. It was in October that His Excellency spoke these words: 'I am glad of the opportunity of meeting you all this day. In the first place, and before saying anything further, you must clearly understand that the Transvaal is, and will remain, British territory. It grieves me to say that there is a certain faction in this country who set the law at defiance; but I assure you that those misguided ones and their instigators will suffer for their lawless behaviour. Her Majesty's Government did not annex the Transvaal to extend her dominions. No, for have we not now, after conquering Zululand, given it up; it was only done for your good. The Zulu war is now over, and Cetewayo is by this time in Cape Town, and will never return to Zululand. I am now slowly travelling to Pretoria, and as soon as I arrive there, with the assistance of His Excellency the Administrator, I will form an Executive body, and then, with the assistance of the sensible and loyal, will frame a Constitution for this territory, which I will transmit for the approval of the home Government, under which Constitution every one will have as great liberty as can be desired. I must remind you now that where the British flag waves, there freedom of speech is allowed, but not licentiousness. I, therefore, now call on you to say what you have to; and if you have any grievance, speak out like men. I close with the same remark that I commenced with, and which I wish you to spread far and wide—*That so long as the sun shines, the Transvaal will remain British territory.*'

When we remember also that the High Commissioner intimated his intention, later on, of hanging Erasmus, one of the prominent malcontents, should he get hold of him, it is not difficult to understand the detestation the Boers held him in. Nevertheless, his display of force had the effect he intended it should have: the malcontents submitted to the inevitable; beyond a refusal here and there to pay taxes to the English Government, and occasional forcible purchases of ammunition, affairs were quiet enough. The mass meetings, however, went on, and the persistence of the leaders in this respect evidently annoyed the High Commissioner beyond measure. His convictions, as expressed in his despatches to the Colonial Office at this crisis, showed a marked contrast to his convictions as delivered personally to the inhabitants. In his despatch of October 29, he said: 'I am compelled to recognise the continuance of grave discontent. I am informed on all sides that it is the intention of the Boers to fight for independence. . . . There is no doubt, I think, that the people are incited to discontent and rebellion by ambitious agitators, but I am compelled also to allow that the timid and wavering, who are awed into taking side against us, are comparatively a small party, and that the main body of the Dutch population are disaffected to our rule.'

To the people in the western part of the Transvaal, about a week previous to inditing the above despatch, he addressed a letter containing this allusion to the agitation: 'I do not doubt that you, and each one of you, have clearly realized that the reforms in government, and the peace and security of the inhabitants of the Transvaal, for which you are rightly anxious, are blessings that can be won only by the loyal and energetic co-operation of all honest and well-meaning men, against the reckless folly of defiance of the law, to which a few misguided partisans and lawless characters have been led to commit themselves, to the prejudice of the welfare of the State, and to their own certain injury and peril.'

Now this was just the kind of 'tall talk' which Sir Bartle Frere had begged Joubert not to use: the more Sir Garnet spoke in this strain, the more the Boers hated him. The dislike they had to Sir Owen Lanyon, at first founded on prejudice, increased daily because he had to act the part of the tax-gatherer. Not only must the taxes due to the British Government be collected, but arrears owing to the old South African Republic.

Surely this was a policy calculated to breed and foment discontent. No doubt it was not Sir Owen Lanyon's policy, but he was the instrument for implementing it, and the Boers hated him in consequence with daily increasing fervour. As an instance of how slight a pretext is sufficient to ensure the animosity of the more ignorant Boers, I may mention that one of the reasons I myself frequently heard Boers assign for disliking Lanyon was, that 'he was nothing but a nigger.' Colonel Lanyon is a dark-complexioned man, and service in the West Indies and in other hot climates had considerably bronzed his face; on this evidence the Boers came to the conclusion he was 'a nigger,' and, ridiculous as the statement may appear, it is nevertheless a fact that this consideration weighed heavily in the minds of hundreds of the people, and helped to confirm his unpopularity amongst them. That he had carried out the collection of arrear taxes with rigour cannot be doubted by comparing the revenue returns after his accession to office with those of former years; but the object of the English Government at that time was to seek all it could possibly get out of the Transvaal; a favourable balance-sheet always commands approval. It was only necessary to prove in Parliament that the Transvaal was financially prosperous, and the voice of the Boer would be unheard or unattended to. As soon as their dissatisfaction became a costly matter they obtained a hearing, and more than a hearing.

Despite the warning the High Commissioner had issued, the meeting called for December 10th was duly held, and at that meeting there evidently was an absence of lukewarmness amongst those attending which had marked, to a considerable degree, former gatherings of a like nature, when there was no danger of interference to the proceedings by the troops in the country. The presence of so many British soldiers quartered all over the Transvaal, and the prohibition which practically Sir Garnet Wolseley issued on the assembling of the Boers, gave a spice to the affair which had been lacking on former occasions. Disaffection was becoming general, and only a favourable opportunity was needed for it to culminate in open rebellion. Still the Boers were not yet prepared to fight. One serious drawback was the absence of any supplies of ammunition suitable for a protracted struggle; the other was the presence in such considerable numbers of the 'rooi balcher' or red-coats. The flag of the South African Republic was openly displayed at this meeting in December, and resolutions of the bitterest hostility to English rule were passed *nem. con.* The people demanded their independence; and the chairman, Mr. Pretorius, sent the demand to Sir Garnet Wolseley, with a request that it might be communicated to the English Government. The names of Pretorius and Bok (secretary) appearing on the document forwarded to the High Commissioner he immediately sent and arrested these gentlemen on a charge of high treason.

It is worth while here to give a copy of the resolutions passed by the people at this meeting, because in the spirit of these resolutions was framed the Convention signed in 1881. The document they drew up was as follows :—

'The people of the South African Republic made known their will on Friday, December 12, and now they wish to amplify it by the following :—

'The time of memorials to the English Government has passed. It is impossible to be saved by that way. The officials of Her Majesty the Queen have, by their untrue and false representations, shut the doors to Her Majesty and the Parliament. They are responsible for that. The people have done what they could again and again to go to the Queen of England, for they believed that, as surely as the sun shines, if the Queen of England and the people of England knew that a free people were oppressed here, they would not allow it. England has been everywhere a protector of liberty, and would protect our liberty if she knew that it was oppressed; but the officials of Her Majesty in South Africa, who continue defending the necessity of the annexation, hide truth, and smother our voice. We can therefore speak no more to England. Nobody is there who replies to us. Therefore we, the people of the South African Republic, proceed to enact—

'1. That the people of the South African Republic have never been subjects of Her Majesty, and are determined not to be; that therefore every one who accuses us of rebellion is a slanderer.

'2. That the people desire that the Government of the South African Republic, whose working action has been stopped, shall, as soon as possible, resume it.

'3. That the people desire that a Volksraad shall be called up as soon as possible.

'4. That the people desire to show to friend and enemy that they wish to avoid everything that appears like bloodshed and violence, and for that reason expect from the Volksraad that it shall take such steps as may make as peaceful a solution as possible of the difficulty to the British Government.

'5. For that purpose, the people expect in the first place from the Volksraad a proclamation on the following points :—

'(*a*) That all the rights of the present inhabitants of the country shall stand under the protection of the present laws.

'(*b*) That to the British Government the right shall be granted to appoint in our country a Consul or diplomatic agent to look after the interests of British subjects.

'(*c*) That the legal expenditure legally done for the necessary expenditure of the country during the interregnum shall be acknowledged.

'(*d*) That differences about boundary lines to native tribes shall be submitted to arbitration.

'(*e*) That the Government is willing to adopt general rules with regard to the native policy, in accordance with the colonies and states of South Africa.

'(*f*) That the Republic is willing to enter a confederation in accordance with the colonies and states of South Africa.

'6. That the people declare themselves willing to forgive all such burghers of the South African Republic as have been led by circumstances to forsake the side of the people for a time; but it cannot promise to extend that forgiveness to such burghers of the South African Republic who came forward as public enemies of the people, and continue deceiving the British Government by their untrue representations.

'7. The people declare further, that until the time of the re-establishment of the Republic, they will not appear in the courts of the country unless forced to do so, and that they shall have all differences between themselves settled by arbitration.

'8. That the people also give a public warning to certain directors of banks in the country to meddle no longer with politics, and thus to become tools in the hands of the enemies of the Republic.

'9. That the people of the South African Republic expect during the interregnum from the high as well as the low officials, that an end will be made to the unnecessary vexations of the burghers, as has lately only too much taken place, and which can have no other result but exasperation. And lastly,

'10. That the people declare their desire, by the help of God, for a powerful Government of the South African Republic, the respect of law, development and advancement of the country, and that they promise, man for man, to co-operate for those purposes, and to defend the Government now established until death.

'*So truly help us, God Almighty!*

'These done by us, elected "voormannen" (delegates), in the name of the people of the South African Republic, on this the 15th day of December 1879.

'H. P. MALAN, Chairman of the Delegates.'

In spite of the serious aspect of the attitude of the Boers, which Sir Garnet Wolseley admitted in the despatch which I have already quoted, he never lost an opportunity of deriding the movement in terms which demonstrated the supreme contempt in which he held, or wished it to be believed he held, the Boers.

Two days after the passing of the resolutions by the 'People,' Sir Garnet Wolseley, at a banquet given to him in Pretoria, used language which certainly would lead one to form the impression that he wished to urge them to break out in arms. On referring to the successful close of the Secocoeni campaign, and the storming of that chief's stronghold, he made the remark, 'I could not help feeling that the battle we were engaged in was essentially a Boer's battle; but there were no Boers there. There were 2000 English soldiers, and volunteers of Africander and European origin raised in this country, and I asked myself, In whose cause is this battle being fought? Why is it fought? Why are we left to fight it out by ourselves when these ignorant men, led by a few designing fellows, are talking nonsense and spouting sedition on the High Veldt?'

So far as we can learn anything of Sir Garnet Wolseley's political views regarding the Transvaal from his public utterances, he appears to have been under the impression that but for the moral pressure brought to bear upon Cetewayo by the Natal Government prior to the annexation, the Transvaal would have been subject to a murderous raid of the Zulus. It must be remembered that Sir Garnet Wolseley was Administrator of Natal in 1875, and his statement on that point must not be undervalued. His belief he avowed openly, that if the English had no other title to the Transvaal, the title she had gained by subjugating Cetewayo and Secocoeni ought to be considered valid. That his knowledge of what might happen and might not happen in the future was not equal to his knowledge of the Transvaal prior to the annexation, was proved by one remark he made publicly: 'I am told that these Boers are advised to keep on agitating in this way because a change of Government in England may give them again the old order of things; but I tell you there is no Government, Whig or Tory, Liberal, Conservative, or Radical, who would dare, under any circumstances, to give back this country. They would not dare, because the English people would not allow them.'

Though satisfied of the absolute finality of the act, he, as I have already said, lost no opportunity of repeating his conviction on that point, and of sneering at a movement the magnitude of which he knew was already great and daily increasing.

Returning to the subject of the arrest of Bok and Pretorius, as soon as that circumstance became known, several hundred Boers assembled armed with the intention of releasing their late chairman, who was detained in Potchefstrom, and but for the efforts of Joubert, Kruger, and other leaders, Pretorius would have been rescued from the hands of the Landdrost, or rather from a miserable, dirty cell in a building called a prison, but which certainly was fit for no other purpose than a kennel. Owing to the representation of Colonel Tucker (of the 80th Regiment, I think), the Landdrost, after a few days, transferred the ex-president to decent quarters. Sir Garnet had these two men arrested, because in his opinion 'some act was demanded for the assertion of the authority of the State'; and writing on the 2d March to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, he expressed satisfaction with the effects produced by these arrests upon the political condition of the country. What the 'effect' might be may be estimated from the fact that the proceedings against these men charged with high treason never got beyond the preliminary examinations of the prisoners; and that whilst Pretorius was awaiting his trial, he was requested to visit Sir Garnet Wolseley at Pretoria, and was then and there offered a seat in the Executive Council of the land.

In support of the allegation of high treason, several Boers who attended the December meeting were called before the Landdrost, but beyond proving the attendance of Pretorius, Paul Kruger, Piet Joubert, Nicholas Smidt (the man who during the late war was the Boers' *fecht general*, or fighting general), their evidence was valueless. The deposition of Gerhardus Hendrikes Buskes, a Hollander, who became famous in Potchefstrom during the war, is worth reproducing :—

'I reside at Potchefstrom. Am advocate and attorney of the High Court. I was present at the meetings of the Boers at the farm of Jan Prinsloo. I arrived there on Monday evening, the 15th December 1879. I came there with Mr. Watermeyer, member of the Cape Parliament. I remained there until Wednesday morning before the meeting broke up. I guess there were between 500 and 600 carts and wagons, and then many people were already coming back. On the 16th December 1879, I saw more than 3000 men on horseback, and more than 1500 in the camp. I saw some with guns, but don't know whether they were loaded. Strict orders were given that no firing was allowed in the camp. I came in the evening of the 15th December 1879, and saw and heard of no resolutions. On Tuesday afternoon I heard the resolutions with reference to the refusal of selling provisions to the English, and five men voted for this resolution by holding up their hands, and nobody was against it. I walked a great deal about the camp, and I saw guns in the camp. I saw more than six. I saw the Transvaal flag there, and Watermeyer and I slept under the same. I have taken the oath of allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen, but this does not prevent me from sleeping under the Transvaal flag. I do not know who was the owner of the wagon. I saw Paul Kruger, and on the 16th saw Piet Joubert speak and explain the resolutions to the people. I saw J. J. Scheepers there at the meeting, and also Henning Pretorius. It is said that M. W. Pretorius, Piet Joubert, Paul Kruger are members of the Committee. My impression is that if Paul Kruger and Pretorius had not been at the meeting, misfortunes might have happened. On Tuesday I heard Pretorius say that the people ought to feel satisfied with their lot, take up no arms, and depend on God. I cannot swear to the signature of Mr. Pretorius.'

Evidently this was hardly the kind of evidence required; it is not surprising, therefore, to find Sir Garnet Wolseley asking the Attorney-General, 'How often, and for what legal reasons, and by what process, could the trials be postponed at the instance of the prosecution?' The reply was, that if once committed for trial, that trial would have to take place within six months of the date of commitment. The tale of the interview between Sir Garnet Wolseley and Pretorius, which resulted in the above-mentioned offer, is told in two ways. Sir Garnet says that Pretorius frequently expressed a wish, whilst his preliminary examination was going on, to pay him a visit; the version of the story as told by Pretorius is that it was Sir Garnet who expressed the wish in the first place to see him. One thing seems certain, that after that visit to Sir Garnet Wolseley, Pretorius was looked upon with a certain amount of suspicion by his fellow-countrymen, notwithstanding that they received him with acclamation when he informed them that he had not consented to Sir Garnet Wolseley's proposal to take a seat in the Executive Council. The Administrator, in explaining to the home Government this matter, wrote in March of 1880:—

'In Pretoria I had several long interviews with him (Pretorius), in the course of which I dwelt strongly on the great injury which this continued agitation was doing to the happiness and prosperity of his country. I assured him forcibly that Her Majesty's Government was determined to maintain its authority in the Transvaal, which was, and would for ever continue to be, a part of the British possessions; and I believe I convinced him of the fruitlessness of further efforts to subvert our sovereignty. I gave him a Dutch translation of your despatch of the 20th November last, which, although it had been published in that form in the *Government Gazette*, he said he had not seen before. Its terms had a considerable effect upon him, and he avowed himself resolved that it was now useless to aim any longer at securing the restoration of the Transvaal to the rule of the Boers.

'Before my arrival in South Africa, Mr. Pretorius had been invited to join the Government, and when I learnt from his conversation that he felt the folly of continuing to oppose British authority, I told him that if he were in earnest in his wish to promote the true interests of his country, he could make no more honest and patriotic endeavour than to persuade his friends to abandon agitation, and to co-operate with the Government in its efforts to develop the prosperity of the province in harmony with the wishes of the people; and I added that he could best give public proof of his approval of these wise and moderate views by accepting a seat in the Executive Council, and taking the oath of allegiance. He expressed his willingness thus to join the Government after a time, but he said he could not, with advantage, publicly do so at that moment, lest, by the appearance of sudden secession from his party, he might lose the influence which it was desirable he should exercise over his countrymen in order to bring about their contented acquiescence in the Constitution Her Majesty had granted them. He promised, if I would help him with conveyances, to travel about the country and explain to the people the nature of the new Constitution, and their favourable prospects of happy government under British rule, and he expressed a hope that, with the aid of your despatch, which he would read to them, he might succeed in inducing a general conviction of the futility and danger of further agitation; then, he said, if he prospered in this mission, he would publicly declare his adherence to the British Government, and would accept a seat in the Executive Council.'

Avowedly it was with the object of conciliating the Boers that Sir Garnet Wolseley made this move; but he must have over-estimated the ignorance of the farmers if he thought that they would attach the slightest value to a representation (in such a Government as that prescribed for the Transvaal) consisting of one member.

As it was with Pretorius and Bok, so it was with Abel Erasmus, the gentleman to whose neck Sir Garnet Wolseley made touching allusion before the man had been placed on his trial. Erasmus was supposed to have incited Secocoeni to revolt, and suspected of having supplied that chief with firearms and ammunition. Whether true or not, the charge was never brought home to him.

Because in the face of a large force of troops in the country the Boers did not break out into open rebellion, but adopted an attitude of passive resistance, Sir Garnet became speedily convinced that he had accomplished his object, and converted disloyalty into loyalty by uttering threats one moment, and peaceful, confidential proposals the next.

Before separating in Dec. 1879, the Boers promised to meet again in April of the year 1880. When April came the meeting was postponed, because they saw for the first time a gleam of hope. Meanwhile Colonel Lanyon had, under the letters patent passed by Her Majesty, chosen his Executive and Legislative Council, three gentlemen of Dutch extraction being nominated for the former, and two Dutchmen included in the latter. As if there had not been enough stage recitals of the intention of Her Majesty to have and to hold for ever the Transvaal, Colonel Lanyon repeated the information when opening the Legislative Council; and in case Colonel Lanyon should not be believed, Sir Garnet Wolseley once more issued the astonishing news by proclamation in the *Government Gazette* at the same time:—

'NOTICE.—Sir Garnet Wolseley having informed the Secretary of State for the Colonies by telegram, on the 9th inst., that rumours were being circulated by designing persons with the object of suggesting to the people of the Transvaal the false and dangerous idea that Her Majesty was not resolved to maintain her sovereignty over this territory, His Excellency has received the following telegram in reply:—

"*Secretary of State for the Colonies to Sir Garnet Wolseley.*

"LONDON, *March* 10, 9.5 P.M.

"You may fully confirm explicit statements made from time to time as to inability of Her Majesty's Government to entertain any proposal for withdrawal of the Queen's sovereignty."'

Slowly but surely Colonel Lanyon revealed little despotic tendencies, which made him daily more unpopular even amongst the loyally inclined inhabitants. As an instance, take the measure introduced by him for the supervision of telegraph messages. In a packed Council, such as that supposed to legislate for the benefit of the Transvaal, the introduction of any measure meant its acceptance. Englishmen beginning to realize the farcical nature of the proceedings, freely expressed their contempt for the new Constitution. The *Volksstem*, with considerable force, remarked: 'It is pretty immaterial what measures are submitted to our abortive Legislature, as it is quite certain the Emperor will follow his own will. The despotic and unconstitutional acts of the Imperial authorities in Natal show to what length Jingoism is prepared to go, and we need expect nothing better here. Thank Heaven, the days of Jingodom are numbered here as well as in England.'

Utterances of this sort did not find favour in the Administrator's ears. Consequently a law was introduced by him imposing certain restrictions on the publication of newspapers—restrictions not necessarily harsh, but the fact of touching the liberty of the press at all offered a good opportunity for an outcry against the tendencies of the Administration, and the opportunity was made the most of, both in and outside the Transvaal, by those who loved not Lanyon.

The malcontent Boers, of course, held a meeting especially for the purpose of protesting against the nominee system, and in the Legislative Council itself Mr. Esterhuyse, one of the Dutch members, attempted to raise the question of the non-fulfilment of the annexation promises; but the Colonial Secretary in a few sentences managed dexterously to shelve the questions put by the honourable member. In the way of other minor fuel added to the fire of discontent was the appointment of Mr. Morcom to the post of Attorney-General in the place of Mr. Maasdorp, who resigned. Mr. Morcom was a clever young lawyer, who had just recently completed his articles under the Attorney-General of Natal, and no doubt was well fitted for the post to which, on that gentleman's recommendation to Sir Garnet Wolseley, he was appointed, save that he was not conversant with the Dutch language, and that he was a young man. Youth does not constitute a disability to hold such an office, it is true; at the same time, there is a certain rule in such matters, an unwritten law in all countries except Natal and the Transvaal, and there it never applies. The appointment of Jacobus Petrus de Wet, late Solicitor-General of the Cape Colony and Recorder of Emgwiland West, over the head of Koetze as Chief-Justice, was also a matter complained of, as Koetze was relegated to the position of puisne judge, whereas he had come to the Transvaal as Chief-Justice. That, however, was by invitation of the Republic; consequently the promise was not considered worth any more than the promises of the English made at the time of the annexation. The fact of the Boers desiring Koetze as Chief-Justice was at all events sufficient reason for preferring De Wet to the place.

Whether Sir Garnet Wolseley had got tired of the Transvaal, or whether he really was convinced on sufficient information of what he wrote, would be a delicate matter for any one not Sir Garnet Wolseley to give an opinion upon. On his way to the Port on April 10th, he gave the opinion hereunder cited, and probably departed from South Africa impressed with the belief that he had made a very good job of this Boer business in about as short a time as any mortal man on the face of the earth could accomplish it. He wrote on April 10th to Sir M. Hicks Beach:—

'Reports from all quarters of the Transvaal sustain the opinion that the people being thoroughly weary of the uncertainty and the troubles attendant upon opposition to the Government, and seeing no hope of any successful issue from the dangerous measures in which they had been induced to place confidence, have determined to renounce all further disturbing action, and to return to the peaceful cares of their rural life, which was already beginning to suffer from the continuance of political irritation.

'The resolution of a part of the people to deny the trade of their produce to Englishmen failed utterly, and expired with conspicuous lack of vitality before the natural forces that were fated to overpower it.

'Taxes are being paid, and the revenue of the country, so long disturbed and in part suspended, is flowing in steadily in its natural course.

'I believe that with the check which has thus been imposed upon the organization of discontent, a foundation has been laid for the administration of affairs in the Transvaal, upon which there may be built, with the aid of time, a fabric of government in furtherance of the prosperity of the people, and in unison with their sympathies and their wishes.'

It is necessary now to change the scene of the story to England, and see what was taking place there bearing on the Transvaal. In the speech delivered from the Throne in February, we find the same old promise reiterated,—enlarged powers of self-government to be granted to the Transvaal,—a repetition once more of a three-year-old violated pledge. It is as well to quote the exact words used, for fear of misrepresenting the matter: 'My anticipations as to the early establishment of peace in South Africa have been fulfilled. The capture and deposition of the Zulu king, and the breaking up of the military organization on which his dynasty was based, have relieved my possessions in that part of the world from danger which has seriously impeded their advancement and consolidation. In Basutoland a native outbreak of considerable importance has been effectually quelled by my Colonial forces; while the Transvaal has been freed from the depredations of a powerful chief, who, having successfully resisted the former Government of the country, had persistently rejected our attempts at conciliation. I have reason to hope that the time is now approaching when an important advance may be made towards the establishment of a union or confederation, under which the powers of self-government already enjoyed by the inhabitants of the Cape Colony may be extended to my subjects in other parts of South Africa.'

If there was not much hope for the Boers in these words, Lord Hartington, the then leader of the Opposition, brought some comfort to the malcontents. His speech was the most encouraging thing they had received for years; it was worth five hundred promises of free legislative institutions. His lordship on that occasion used these words: 'It behoves us to concentrate our resources, and to limit instead of extending our Empire. But this is not the course we have pursued. We have undertaken fresh responsibilities. Her Majesty's speech refers to the war in South Africa, but it ignores the chief subject of difficulty in that part of the world. We have no doubt deposed the Zulu king and destroyed the military power of the Zulu nation. I do not now discuss the settlement of Zululand, or consider whether it is hopeful for the maintenance of peace or not. But the chief difficulty in South Africa is the condition of the Transvaal, to which no reference has been made in Her Majesty's speech. I believe that papers on this subject are promised. I am not going to state at this time my opinion as to the policy which ought to be pursued there. I will only say that it is perfectly clear now that the annexation of the Transvaal was a measure adopted by the Government, and sanctioned by the House, under wrong impressions and incorrect information. We were informed that a large majority of the European settlers and inhabitants of the Transvaal were in favour of that annexation. It is now proved conclusively that a large majority of the Boers are bitterly against it. We were told that we could not permit the foreign policy adopted by the Government of the Transvaal to be continued. We have ourselves been compelled to adopt almost precisely the same lines of policy, and under these circumstances I think it ought not to be considered *a settled question* simply because the annexation has taken place. *If it be proved* that it is for the advantage of the district, and for the peace of the whole community of South Africa, that the Transvaal should continue to be governed by us, by all means let it be so. *But if, on the other hand*, we find that it would be more advantageous, and more honourable, to restore the former Government of that country, then I say that no false sense of dignity ought to stand in the way.'

To suit the party purposes of English politicians, the malcontent Boers were thus asked in so many words to stick to their colours; this was a godsend to them indeed. It is true that Mr. Jenkins threw a dash of cold water on the argument of Lord Hartington, which had been so bravely cheered, by stating his (Mr. Jenkins') belief 'that some of the utterances with regard to the Transvaal which had fallen from that side of the House were rather unfortunate. The Opposition had, he thought, so far committed themselves on that question at the time when the South Africa Bill was passed, that it was hardly fair to treat it as an open question now.'

But what cared the Boers for the author of *Ginx's Baby*, when the leader of the Liberal party had expressed his opinion that the annexation was wrong, and that if the Liberal party had the power they would cancel that act? Sir Charles Dilke's remark, that 'the bitter feeling of the Boers against the English was beginning to spread,' more than counterbalanced in the Boer mind the ungracious reference to history by Mr. Jenkins, especially when the Liberal press took the Transvaal theme up, and in some cases re-sounded the keynote Lord Hartington had struck. Take the *Echo* as an instance. What could be more encouraging than this extract from its leading columns?—'Look where we will, it is impossible to find a single valid argument in favour of retaining a country which we ought never to have occupied. Whilst we hold it, we stand disgraced before the world; it can never bring us anything but trouble and outlay; we have already in the same region a precedent for restoring a province wrongfully annexed, and justice and expediency alike demand that the action of 1854 be imitated in 1880.'

When later, the dissolution of Parliament followed, and Mr. Gladstone went to Scotland and gave his opinion about the Transvaal, the Boers saw, or thought they saw, at last the realization of their long-cherished hope. Should Mr. Gladstone come into power once more, after the under-cited utterances, the reversal of the annexation act, the withdrawal of British troops, and the restoration of the country to the Boers, were certain. So they thought, and so any one less dull of comprehension than the Boers would think. The late leader of the great Liberal party had already confessed that the Liberal party had been deceived as to the feeling of the Boers in 1877, when Sir Theophilus Shepstone visited them; the coming leader of the great Liberal party now condemned the annexation in hardly less measured terms. If correctly reported, Mr. Gladstone, at Peebles, on March 30, said: 'We have got a Government that increases our taxes, and yet does not pay our debts; we have got a Government that promises a great deal about legislation, and neglects it, and throws it overboard in order to pursue mischievous, disquieting, and disturbing schemes, while our interests are neglected and left in abeyance. What is the effect of these schemes? The effect, if we look at the state of things abroad, is this: that they increase our territory without increasing our strength, just as if, as I have said before, a landlord were to buy an estate adjacent to his own on condition that he should pay all the rates, and receive none of the rents. That is the meaning of adding places like Cyprus and places like the country of the Boers in South Africa to the British Empire. And, moreover, I would say this: that if those acquisitions were as valuable as they are valueless, I would repudiate them, because they are obtained by means dishonourable to the character of our country.'

There being no question that the Transvaal is 'as valuable as it is valueless,' the inference drawn in Boerland from that remark is not difficult to understand. On the previous day (March 19) the right honourable gentleman also made an allusion to South African affairs, which in itself would have satisfied the Boers till he should come into office. If the right honourable gentleman had at that time known what was to be the result of his policy when in power, disagreeing with his speech when out of power, he could not have been a truer prophet than he proved himself in this strain: 'The state of things which now prevails in Asia, where blood is, we believe, at this moment flowing; the state of things that has recently prevailed in Africa, *and may be soon renewed*, almost tempts me, in addressing the present Administration, to use the lines of Tennyson, which he puts into the mouth of his King Arthur when he speaks to Queen Guinevere:

> "The children
> Born of these are sword and fire,
> Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws."'

To show that these words reached the Transvaal, I will give a copy of the report of them as I find it in a Transvaal newspaper of the day. The quotation I have already given is from the London *Times*. By the following extract it will be perceived that the speech lost nothing in transit: 'If the Transvaal were as valuable as it is valueless, he would restore it, because the acquisition *had brought discredit on the English name*. There were many who saw that the country, now standing in a position of security, could be very well managed by the Boers. They would know how to steer clear of past errors; and the restoration, *sanctioned by England*, would have given a strength, a peace and security—a permanency—heretofore unknown, and, as far as I am able to see, still out of our reach. A gentleman who would have given universal satisfaction was *unani-*

mously agreed upon as the future President, and all would have been well. Guarantees for security to person and property would have been exacted, and the Boers, seeing that England really meant honestly and honourably, would have progressed almost as rapidly—not quite—as we are now doing. Land would not have depreciated in value, because a large immigration of Old Colony farmers would immediately have come into a territory of such unlimited extent and resources.' If after this the Boers became infidels in the matter of political honesty in England, on receipt of the news that followed the advent of Mr. Gladstone to office, can any one feel surprise?

Singularly enough, on the very day that Mr. Gladstone was talking of 'repudiating acquisitions obtained by means dishonourable to the character of our country,' Mr. W. E. Forster was also acting the part of a prophet at Kendal, although his prophecy was a contradiction of the future Prime Minister's ideas. 'The Conservatives,' remarked Mr. Forster, 'said the Liberals would break the present obligations of the Government; but it was well known that no party that came into power could refuse to carry out the obligations of its predecessors.' I say Mr. Forster was acting the part of the prophet, because undoubtedly Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party started their new administrative career, as regarded the Transvaal, on the lines which the Kendal orator was satisfied they would adopt.

Mr. Gladstone's and Lord Hartington's speeches were, in pamphlet form, sown broadcast all over the Transvaal; Mr. Forster's remark was never heard of; and if it had been, it would have been ignored by the malcontents. Little they knew what an election is in England, or the value of an election speech. Imagine the bitterness of their spirit when the text of the Queen's Speech of May 20th, opening the new Parliament, reached them. Already Messrs. Joubert and Kruger, on hearing of the return of a Liberal majority, and the calling of Mr. Gladstone to office, had written asking him, who had promised so much as a lover of justice, to do an act of justice by rescinding the act of annexation of the Transvaal. These gentlemen wrote thus from Cape Town on May 10th:—

'Sir,—We beg most humbly to lay before you a few observations regarding the present state of things in the Transvaal. After the annexation of our country by Sir Theophilus Shepstone, and more particularly after the Secretary of State for Colonies' (*sic*) Affairs having refused to listen to the solemn protest (which the Government of the Republic had laid against the wilful and authoritative act of said official), in order to uphold said protest, and to take such measures as might tend to the restoration of the independence of our country, the people appointed a Committee. The Committee had the honour to address you a few weeks ago, and to bring you the heartfelt thanks of the people of the Transvaal.

'It is needless to repeat here what is well known, that whatever was done by the Committee of the people of the South African Republic, was utterly in vain. We were unsuccessful, and our strongest arguments to rebut all what (*sic*) was advanced for the defence of the annexation fell to the ground, and was not listened to. Seeing this, the people, in December 1879, resolved not to send any petitions more to England, and to restore themselves at the proper time their own Government. Nothing has happened to alter those resolutions of the people. The people is waiting for the proper time, and in the meantime leaves free hands to the Government; that is now, without caring for, or troubling themselves with what it does. The people is at rest, not because it is satisfied, but because knowing what is resolved upon, they can wait.

'There was and still is amongst the people a firm belief that truth prevails. They were confident that one day or another, by the mercy of the Lords, the reins of the Imperial Government would be entrusted again to men who look out for the honour and glory of England, not by acts of injustice and crushing force, but by the way of justice and good faith.

'And indeed their belief has proven to be a good belief.

'We, the representatives of the Committee aforesaid, appeal to you so that justice may be done to our country.

'Whatever was to be said for the defence of our good right, and for rebutting the damaging and untruthful accusations against the South African Republic, we did say repeatedly, and corroborated it with good evidence. The several Blue Books laid before the Imperial Parliament by the Government contain the greatest part of those documents.

'We trust that after due consideration of all those documents you will feel at liberty to rescind the annexation of our poor country, and to reinstate in its full vigour the treaty of Sandrivier of 1852, a real treaty of peace made between the representatives of Her

Majesty the Queen of England and those of the Boer emigrants, founders of the South African Republic.'

Eleven days later their hopes were dashed to the ground by reading the telegraphic report of the Queen's Speech as written by Mr. Gladstone, containing the now hard polished promise of Liberal representative institutions. I append the extract which made the Boer leaders scarcely believe their eyes while they read: 'I invite your careful notice to the important questions of policy connected with the future of South Africa. I have continued to commend to the favourable consideration of the authorities and of the peoples in the various settlements the project of confederation. *In maintaining my supremacy* over the Transvaal, with its diversified population, I desire both to make provision for the security of the indigenous races, and to extend to the European settlers institutions based on large and liberal principles of self-government.'

Can any one blame the Boers for wishing and determining to wipe their hands once and for all of any connection with England and her justice-loving statesmen after this, confirmed as it was by the following letter Mr. Gladstone himself wrote to Messrs. Kruger and Joubert in reply to their appeal I have given above?—

'MR. GLADSTONE TO MR. KRUGER AND MR. JOUBERT.

'10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL, *June* 8, 1880.

'GENTLEMEN,—I have received your letter of the 10th of May, and I observe that it must have been written before the announcement of the policy of Her Majesty's Government with respect to the Transvaal, made on the 20th of that month in the Speech from the Throne, could have reached you. I will not, however, on that account content myself with a simple acknowledgment.

'It is undoubtedly matter for much regret that it should, since the annexation, have appeared that so large a number of the population of Dutch origin in the Transvaal are opposed to the annexation of that territory, but it is impossible now to consider that question as if it were presented for the first time. We have to deal with a state of things which has existed for a considerable period, during which obligations have been contracted, especially, though not exclusively, towards the native population, which cannot be set aside.

'Looking to all the circumstances, both of the Transvaal and the rest of South Africa, and to the necessity of preventing a renewal of disorders which might lead to disastrous consequences, not only to the Transvaal, but to the whole of South Africa, our judgment is that the Queen cannot be advised to relinquish her sovereignty over the Transvaal; but consistently with the maintenance of that sovereignty we desire that the white inhabitants of the Transvaal should, without prejudice to the rest of the population, enjoy the fullest liberty to manage their local affairs. We believe that this liberty may be most easily and promptly conceded to the Transvaal as a member of a South African Confederation.'

From the time of the accession of the Liberals to power, until the outbreak of the rebellion, their sole policy regarding the Transvaal appears to have been to thoroughly pound into the minds of the malcontent Boers the fact that the country could not be given back. Mr. Gladstone had in the Queen's Speech, and in his own letter, commenced the work of revealing to the Boers that they must not rely upon him in his election periods. Lord Kimberley added his dictum by telegraph, 'Under no circumstances whatever can the Queen's sovereignty over the Transvaal be relinquished'; and again in the House of Lords in May he clenched the matter by giving his reasons for such a policy. Lord Carnarvon having suggested the desirability of the Secretary of State for the Colonies being firm in his language, and careful to give no encouragement to the Dutch settlers to suppose that there was any uncertainty in respect to British rule in the Transvaal, Lord Kimberley in reply said: 'He was, as he had said, inclined to think it would have been better if we had not annexed it; *but assurances having been given to the native population* that they would be under the British Crown, and the communication having been made to the Dutch settlers that there was no intention to abandon the annexation, it would not be desirable now to recede. *There was still a stronger reason than that for not receding.* It was impossible to say what calamities such a step as receding might not cause to the native population. It would be lamentable if, after the expenditure of so much blood and treasure to restore peace in South Africa, there should be recurrence of internecine struggles. The number of the natives in the Transvaal was 800,000, and that of the whites only 60,000. *Difficulties* between the Zulus and the frontier tribes would again arise, and looking, as they must, to South Africa as a whole, the Government, after a *careful consideration* of the question, came to the conclusion that they must have it understood that *we could not* relinquish the Transvaal. Nothing could be more unfortunate than uncertainty in respect of such a matter. We must pursue a steady course ; and he hoped that those who took an interest in this question would remember that in respect of no quarter were patience and forbearance more necessary than in respect of South Africa.'

It only remained for the Boers now to *make* the Liberal Ministry afford still more 'careful consideration' to the circumstances of the Transvaal.

The tax-gatherer is not a welcome visitor in any clime. The Boers regard all taxes as iniquitous; tax-gathering appears to have been Sir Owen Lanyon's *forte*. Relying on Article 16 and Article 73 of the Grondwet or Constitution of the Republic,—which respectively set forth, 'The people will receive year by year an estimates law of the ordinary expenditure for Church and State, and learn from it how much the taxes of every one will amount to,' and 'The President will annually have to submit to the Volksraad the proposal of a law of estimates of general expenditure and revenue, and point out therein how to make up the deficiency or apply the surplus,'—a test case was tried before the High Court as to the legality or illegality of the levying of taxes at all, seeing that the annexation proclamation provided that the laws then in force should remain in force until altered by legislative authority ; but, as might be expected, the sole judge who occupied the bench at the time this appeal was heard, hardly ventured to deliver a judgment which would declare every act of taxation since the annexation illegal. If there was one tax more than another which caused dissatisfaction, it was the Railway Tax, the imposition of which under the law, as read by the British authorities, was entirely repugnant to the meaning of the Act when passed by the Republic. Not only was grumbling universal at the tax itself, but at the total absence of benefits derived from it, and the very shadowy prospect of benefit to come from it. The Boers had this peculiar constitutional spectacle constantly before their eyes : by virtue of the laws passed by the Republic, the British claimed the right to and did tax the people, but such safeguards and protections as the Grondwet imposed to prevent injustice being done the people, were treated as dead letters, exploded theories, or cancelled clauses in the law. Under the republic the Boers refused or neglected to pay taxes in numberless instances; so common a circumstance was it for Boers to be in arrears, and so inefficient and devoid of all method was the system of accounts kept, that it was simply impossible to say who was and who was not in arrears—impossible to say who had paid every farthing owing and who had not paid one farthing. The system pursued to gather in arrears was a very simple one. In every case of doubt the claim was made for a possible amount owing, and it rested with the defendant to prove the negative, not with the Government to prove the claim it made. Over and over again, Boers coming before the magistrates pointed out the illogical interpretation put upon the law by the Special Commissioner of Finance, or Sir Owen Lanyon (whoever was responsible for it), and over and over again the Boers openly told the magistrates, 'You will drive us to desperation; you will force us to open resistance.' Not by an individual here and there was this warning given in 1880 from January to November, but parties of Boers, of twenty or more, came and uttered the same prophecy, or went a step further and flatly told the magistrate to his face they would not pay the unjust demands made by the Government.

The arrival of Sir George Pomeroy Colley as High Commissioner for South-Eastern Africa and Governor of Natal, in the spring of the year, scarcely raised a hope in the breasts of the malcontents. They had given up all hopes of obtaining their desires by legitimate means. In Parliament, during the debate on South African affairs in September, there was only one voice which argued that the Transvaal might be given up without disadvantage. What was that voice—the voice of Mr. Courtney—worth when Mr. Grant Duff, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, revealed the intentions of the Government towards the Transvaal, as expressed in the following language?—

> 'On considering the matter, the Cabinet had come to the conclusion that to reverse the annexation would be unwise. The act of Sir Theophilus Shepstone had been upheld by three successive Secretaries of State, and by two Cabinets, representing between them almost every shade of English opinion. In the Transvaal itself, the anti-British party was getting weaker, and the pro-British party stronger. If England were to retire from the Transvaal, what would happen? Would the men of English race all leave the country? No, indeed. The first thing that would happen would

be a civil war between the pro-British and the anti-British party, and although he had admitted that the anti-British party was more numerous, the pro-British party would be reinforced by many unquiet spirits from the regions round, and it would be able to call to its assistance the overwhelming masses of the native population, who did not love and had little cause to love, the South African Republic. He was afraid that the very worst gift which could be bestowed on Mr. Kruger, Mr. Joubert, and the other allies of the hon. member for Liskeard, would be the restoration of that very independence for which the hon. member asked. He did not think they would live long to rejoice in their victory. The breakdown of the proposed Confederation Conference put an end for the time to the possibility of giving to the Transvaal responsible Government under a Confederation. All the more desirable was it that the legitimate wishes of the people of the Transvaal should be in every possible way furthered by Her Majesty's Government; more especially was it desirable that arrangements should be come to with Portugal which might enable us to connect the Transvaal by a railway with the port of Lorenço Marques and Delagoa Bay.'

Sir Garnet Wolseley's assurances had gone home to the mind of the Cabinet. The Cabinet had 'considered the matter,' and after consideration had come to the above conclusion. The member for Liskeard and his allies, Joubert and Kruger, were clamouring for what would prove 'the very worst gift that could be bestowed on the Transvaal.'

Of all the English files of newspapers which I have been able to consult, I can only find one which, taking this debate in the Commons as its text, spoke with true prescience, and that was the *Pall Mall Gazette*. While pointing out that the Government could hardly have given any other answer, it remarked that the alternative was by no means hopeful. The writer added: 'That a war of independence is now a probable contingency may be believed. But in the event of armed resistance to British authority, either local or general, is the Government prepared to uphold British rule at the point of the bayonet? Is the Transvaal to remain a South African Ireland—always disaffected, always distrusted, always dominated by a foreign minority, who, while utterly out of sympathy with the bulk of the population, only hold their own by an odious and insolent appeal to the physical force behind them?

This, it must be borne in mind, is the alternative which the Government have accepted in declining to restore to the Boers their independence; and so long as this condition of things remains, so long will the settlement of the South African question be an impossibility. So long as this great Dutch grievance exists, not a Dutchman in any part of South Africa—and it must be remembered that the Dutch constitute a majority of the European population—will move a finger to forward any scheme in which the Imperial Government is interested. To talk of South Africa as a whole becoming under these circumstances responsible for her own defence, is to talk of what is utterly chimerical.'

Just as it only required a little pressure from a section of the Liberal party to make the Gladstone Government recall the man whom Lord Kimberley had pressed to remain in office at the Cape, so it only required a little show of armed force on the part of the Boers to scatter all these conclusions to the four winds of heaven.

Sir George Colley, soon after his arrival in Natal, visited the Transvaal, but he seems to have come away with the same impression that had now fixed itself on the minds of most men, that the Boers would not fight, and that there was an abatement of the feeling inimical to British rule. Such was the opinion he gave in opening the session of the Legislative Council of Natal as regards the spirit of disaffection. If he was misled in this respect, others were not.

There came to Natal at this time to occupy the editorial chair of the *Natal Witness*, a journal published in Pietermaritzburg, a man whose name has been brought prominently forward during the late war. This was Mr. or 'Dr. Aylward, commandant, agitator, and author,' as he has been since styled by the journal he edited. If I rely in some measure on certain statements respecting this gentleman, culled from the same source, I probably shall not commit many errors. His real name was Murphy, and, born in the south of Ireland, he inherited many of the prominent characteristics of the typical Irishman. What religion he boasted of was Roman Catholic. Early in life he was employed in a publishing office in Edinburgh, but his first journalistic work was on a New York paper. His story of this venture was briefly told as follows: 'I was on a Yankee paper, the proprietor of which was in a lunatic asylum, and all the contributors were lunatics—and troth I was the biggest lunatic of the lot.' From New York he went 'West,' editing papers both in Nevada and San Francisco. He claimed to be a friend of Charles Lever, with whom on his return to Ireland from America he quarrelled, and boasted that Lever revenged himself by depicting him under the guise of 'Joe Atley' in his novel, *Lord Kilgobbin.* When in Ireland, Aylward undoubtedly became involved in some Fenian enterprise, and in the result he received Government money to pay his passage to South Africa. At the Diamond Fields he soon proved himself a firebrand; amongst the 'lighter offences' committed by him was the organization of a rebellious band, which necessitated the despatch of troops from Cape Town to quell it. In Kimberley he started a daily paper, but that he did not always command the infinite esteem of the people is proved by the fact of his having once at a public meeting had to keep his excited hearers at bay with a revolver. At the Gold Fields he became a familiar figure, as in other parts of the Transvaal, as a commandant of irregular troops.

Personally I had little acquaintance with Aylward. I think it was about a fortnight after the outbreak of the war that we met, and he then claimed a connection, in a literary capacity, with a well-known daily journal published in Fleet Street. In the course of our first interview, he referred to his own merciful attributes in that he had not 'strung up' a certain newspaper editor at the Gold Fields, 'when I had him in my hands and ought to have done it.' This reflection seemed to cause Aylward regret; perhaps the secret of his regret was that he found in the man to whom he had extended his clemency a rival editor in Natal. Whatever may have been Aylward's antecedents, he was certainly a powerful and versatile writer, and his knowledge of the Transvaal, both under the Republic and since the annexation, was thorough. With a deep-rooted aversion to the English Government, he naturally sided with the malcontent Boers, and no one can doubt that up to, and shortly after, the rebellion broke out, and while he was still performing his editorial duties in Pietermaritzburg, he was in correspondence with the Boer leaders. On their behalf he wielded his pen with discretion and justice. Had Aylward led a more blameless life before coming to Natal, his influence to avert the catastrophe which immediately followed the outbreak of the war would have been great; probably had attention been paid to his writings by the officials in Natal, a war would have been averted, because the true state of feeling in the Transvaal would have been known. He had imbibed a true

Boer's hatred for Sir Owen Lanyon, openly showed it, and he periodically asked for his recall.

To show that I have not over-estimated Aylward's importance, I will give an extract or two from his writings, which will be sufficient to convince the person most prejudiced against him that he foresaw what many were blind to. On August 3rd, 1880, I find him giving this opinion: 'If a reduction of the Transvaal garrison is to be attempted, the reduction must amount to a removal. It would be impolitic, and provocative of disaster, to leave a single battalion in the country, or indeed to reduce the garrison to the extent that might leave it open to isolation, and unable to defend all its communications.' This warning was issued at the time the proposal was made to send the King's Dragoon Guards to India. Later on, Aylward's remarks were more calculated to promote an armed outbreak than to warn the British authorities of the danger ahead. For instance, writing on the 9th September, he said: 'We cannot but say that we think that, even at the risk of provoking the ire of the Attorney-General, and the rage of the frivolous West Indian, a demonstration of the most unmistakeable sort ought to take place, one that will convince the English people that there is earnestness behind all the rounded periods and sonorous sentences of the epoch of "talk" and "protest"—an era that we hope has passed away, not with the necessity for its existence, that is still in being; but with the hopes of its authors, hopes utterly and for ever dashed by recent telegrams from Ministers at home.' But in the following month, presumably convinced that no blow would be struck by the malcontents, we find him penning these words: 'The Transvaal having done nothing to assert its will or to prove its sincerity, the matter of the independence of its people has ceased to be a question of practical politics. We say it with regret, but lessons of fact cannot be repudiated. . . . Joubert has said: "I leave the country in the hands of the great God"; Pretorius went over to the enemy's camp; Kruger is not followed by all the people.'

This impression momentarily prevailed in other well-informed quarters as to the intentions of the Boers. In November the *Volksstem*, the avowed organ of the discontented party, published at Pretoria, remarked that there was no reason why, at the forthcoming mass meeting of the Boers in January, the question of union with the Cape Colony should not be discussed, since it was no good sending delegates to England any more to obtain the reversal of the act of annexation. It was against the editor of this journal that the Pretorian Government commenced a criminal action for inserting a notice given by a number of Boers that they refused to pay taxes to the Government, because the country was being illegally robbed.

We now come to the actual outbreak of rebellion. Meanwhile, be it remembered, the Transvaal had been comparatively denuded of troops. Apprehended disturbances on the Pondo border had necessitated a force being despatched there; the dragoons had already gone to India, and what regiments remained in the Transvaal consisted of the 94th, the 21st, and a company or two of the 58th. War in Basutoland, and pressure upon the resources of the Cape Government, had induced Sir Owen Lanyon to send under command of Ferreira a troop of irregulars, about 300 in all, raised in Pretoria, and known as the Transvaal Light Horse.

Mark again the words of Aylward, just before the fire was kindled: 'The Government (*i.e.* the Transvaal Government) seem determined to goad the people to insurrection. The absence of the dragoons, the 58th, and the floating English element here, are the elements that point to opportunity. There can't possibly occur a moment when fortune would bring about a concourse of circumstances more favourable for a general Boer rising than exists at present, and is this, we ask, the time for a petty tyrant to attempt to goad the people into action? We know the state of feeling throughout the country, and we are aware of the state of preparedness for war in which are at least four important districts.'

A few days later, and the Bezhuidenot affair at Potchefstrom happened. Again to quote Aylward: 'As straws show how the current runs, so the *émeute* at Potchefstrom clearly indicates the approach of civil war. No doubt the Boers don't expect to gain much, but they mean that "some shall die for the people."' And after this prophetic utterance, Aylward urged the necessity for 'healing statesmanship' by Sir George Colley.

The settlement of the Potchefstrom affair unfortunately did not rest in the hands of Sir George Colley; it lay with Sir Owen Lanyon, and he proposed to deal with the matter in true military fashion, although he knew that there was not a sufficient force available to quell any organized or general rising of the Boers. Before entering into the detail of Sir Owen Lanyon's military administration at this juncture, it will be well to give the history of the Bezhuidenot affair, because it is an instance of the manner in which the civil administration was, to use Aylward's words, 'goading the people to desperation.' I would like it to be understood that I am by no means an admirer of Aylward, nor am I a friend of his. His swaggering manner made me take a dislike to him at our first interview; our second and last interview was at Laing's Nek after the Majuba fight, and my dislike for him was certainly increased by seeing him in the Boer lines. If I quote him, it is therefore not with any intention of exalting him, but merely as an act of justice to a man who has had plenty of abuse heaped upon him, and to show that there was in Maritzburg, if there was not in Pretoria, one man who foresaw the storm.

The details I gave of the Bezhuidenot affair were related to me personally by the Landdrost of Potchefstrom under the British Government, and by the Landdrost appointed by the Boers as soon as they seized the town, and who was, previous to the outbreak, Bezhuidenot's advocate when he was brought before the Court. Bezhuidenot was no doubt one of the Boers who only wanted a little provocation to pick a quarrel and bring matters to a crisis. He with two other Boers in the middle of the year voluntarily suffered a week's imprisonment rather than pay a fine of £5 imposed for obtaining gunpowder without having a permit. The sacrifice these men made of their liberty on that occasion was in some measure rewarded, as on coming out of jail they harangued the bystanders, and were presented with twenty sovereigns. This Bezhuidenot, singularly enough, is the son of the Bezhuidenot who, sixty years ago, became famous in the Cape Colony. Summoned for ill-treating a Hottentot, he refused to obey the mandate of the Court. A force of soldiers was sent to arrest him. He fired on them, and fled to a place which was difficult of access, but was followed up by the military and shot. The result of that was an outbreak of the Boers. Probably most people by this time have heard how that rebellion terminated, in the capture of five of the leaders, who were, *by sentence of the Court, hanged in the presence of their friends and followers* at Slachter's Nek.

Bezhuidenot on this particular occasion had certainly right on his side; he did not imitate the example of his father. He was sued by the Government for £27, 5s., or for nearly £14 more than was owing by him; and it must be borne in mind this was not the only case in which the Treasury officials at Pretoria made demands which were illegal. Over and over again people summoned for taxes supposed to be due, produced their receipts when the matter came into Court, and proved that they owed nothing. Only a few weeks prior to the Potchefstrom incident, the goods of a citizen of Pretoria were attacked, *without any previous process of law*, for taxes set down at £80. Afterwards £20 was ascertained to be the amount owing. Numberless instances of mismanagement such as these—mistakes, if you like to call them so, but always mistakes on the right side, *i.e. against* the taxpayer—caused the Boers to think that the Government was intent on squeezing money out of them.

Mr. Goetz, the Landdrost of Potchefstrom, informed me that when Bezhuidenot appeared before him to answer the claim made by the Government for £27, 5s., he declared his willingness to pay £14 out of that amount, on condition that the Landdrost would give a receipt, in which it was stipulated that the £14 should be handed over to the South African Republic if it was restored to govern the Transvaal in the following month of January. This the Landdrost would not consent to do, until he had communicated with the Government at Pretoria, and the case was adjourned for that purpose. When it came on for hearing again, the magistrate accepted Bezhuidenot's tender of £14, and ordered him to pay the 'costs,' which curiously enough amounted to £13, 5s., thus bringing the sum up to £27, 5s., or the total of the original claim. Goetz says that he was instructed by the Government to give costs against Bezhuidenot. On what principle of law or justice a man who has been dragged into Court to prove that he has been overcharged should have to pay the costs of rectifying an error of the other side, it is difficult to imagine. Bezhuidenot, acting on his attorney's, Van Eck's, advice, refused to pay the costs. The Landdrost thereupon attached a wagon belonging to Bezhuidenot, and announced that it would be sold at 11 A.M. on the 11th November. In the Potchefstrom district there were Messrs. Piet Cronje, Koetze, and Basson, who had been sued for arrears of taxes alleged to be due to the Government, but they had refused to pay them.

On the morning of the day announced for the sale of Bezhuidenot's wagon, these Boers, with about a hundred of their sympathizers, came into the town armed, and in front of the Landdrost's office a harangue was delivered by some of the foremen or leaders respecting the judgment given against Bezhuidenot. The crowd then proceeded to the public square, and waited quietly till the time appointed for the sale. When the sheriff got on Bezhuidenot's wagon and began to read out the conditions of sale, Cronje immediately rushed to the wagon, pulled him off, and kicked him, saying, 'Away with you, you Government officials; we don't acknowledge you.' The Boers assembled then dragged the wagon to the centre of the square, where they guarded it until a span of oxen was brought, and then the wagon was driven off in triumph. The sheriff having no force at his disposal to resist the seizure, had to stand by and watch the proceedings.

When the armed Boers came into the town and let it be known publicly what they intended doing, Mr. Goetz became alarmed, and sent word to the Government by Mr. Forssman, a member of the Legislative Council, who happened to be starting at the time for Pretoria, as to what was taking place. When subsequently the sheriff was prevented discharging his duty, he sent an express messenger to Pretoria to report the matter, and asked for help. He stated in his despatch that 'he looked upon the defiance shown by the Boers as a very serious affair, and liable to spread throughout this country if not at once dealt with with a strong hand.'

Sir Owen Lanyon, in the first place, sent Commandant Raaf, C.M.G., to Potchefstrom as a special superintendent of police, with power to enrol volunteers as constables to carry out the service of all process issued by the magistrate. On the 14th November, Sir Owen Lanyon directed Colonel Bellairs, C.B., commanding Transvaal district, to detail a force to proceed to Potchefstrom to aid the civil power, and to furnish escort, if desired by the Landdrost, to Commandant Raaf. In a despatch to the Earl of Kimberley on the same date, Sir Owen Lanyon wrote respecting this affair: 'Whilst the occasion demanded that prompt measures should be taken in order to support the civil authority, and to show these misguided people that the law cannot be defied, I do not anticipate that any serious trouble will arise out of the affair. It is only a repetition of what has occurred at Middleburg and other places where there was no force available. But it is time that more serious notice should be taken of such acts, in order to deter further breaches of the peace. To this end the Attorney-General has issued his instructions to the public prosecutor.'

Colonel Winslow, with 140 men of the 21st Regiment, and

Major Thornhill, R.A., with two guns, immediately marched for Potchefstrom. To Commandant Raaf I am indebted for the narrative of events which follow. It was on the 16th November that he arrived at Potchefstrom for the purpose of apprehending the ringleaders of the disturbance. This act is fixed as on the 5th of November, and it was on the 16th that Commandant Raaf arrived for the purpose of apprehending the ringleaders. Going with two men to Cronje's farm distant about thirty miles west of Potchefstrom, he found fifty-two armed Boers; it was therefore impossible to apprehend the owner should these offer resistance. Cronje and Basson, coming out from the house, greeted Raaf with, 'Here we are.' To use Raaf's own words: 'I told them there were warrants out for their apprehension; and I tried to explain the matter to them, and to persuade them to come and give themselves up, in which case they would be more likely to be dealt leniently with than if they offered resistance. They replied, "Here we are; take us if you can." I returned to Potchefstrom and reported the matter. A week later I met Cronje again on his farm; I had three attendants, and I found he had about a hundred Boers assembled. Again I explained to him it was a wrong course they were pursuing to defy the law; that the law had been broken, and would have to be vindicated. Cronje then became excited, and said they had bowed long enough under the yoke of oppression; that they had tried by fair means to get their country restored; but now, as a last resource, they were obliged to take to arms, and they would fight to the last drop of their blood for their country. However, finally it was agreed that the Boers would meet me a few days later close to a place called Fendersdorp. When I went to this meeting by appointment, I found 300 or 400 armed Boers there. Before reaching the spot, however, I was stopped by four armed men, who brought a led horse. They told me to get out of my trap, and ride with them the remainder of the distance on the spare horse; but first they searched me to see if I was armed, though I had only one orderly accompanying me. When within twenty-five yards of the house, I was told to dismount, and an armed man guarded me on my right and left hand. The whole crowd of Boers came up, and Cronje, Basson, and Bezhuidenot stepped out from the ranks to meet me. They informed me that Paul Kruger had arrived the night before from Rustenburg. I said I had come, according to agreement, to see whether we could not settle matters. If they—the defaulters—would give themselves up prisoners at

Potchefstrom on a certain day, I would guarantee not to imprison them, but that they would be well treated until they appeared in court for trial. Cronje flew into a great temper, and said if they did justice to me and to my attendant they would take us prisoners, and have us tied up. I told him I was not armed, and was alone amongst them, without the means of assistance; if they chose to do such a thing, they could—I was only doing my duty. Thereupon Cronje turned to one of the Boers, and told him to call Paul Kruger. He came, and after an exchange of civilities, I told him the object of my presence, and said it was the third time I had come. I found that matters were coming to a crisis; that I had begged of Cronje and the others who had broken the law to appear at Potchefstrom and give themselves up, and that then everything would perhaps pass off better than they supposed. After I had finished this explanation, Kruger said, "I only arrived here last night. I was sent for; but before I came I was not aware that matters were so dark and threatening as I found on my arrival here." He added, "I had come to try to prevent the shedding of blood. Here you see all these men are armed, and they are determined to fight. If it is in my power, I shall try and do all I can to keep them from coming to blows. For years I have striven to do this; but now this is the last and final effort I shall make. If they won't listen to me, then I must wash my hands of it; and I can truly say that I have done my utmost." Kruger expatiated on their wrongs; and then I told him I could do nothing more in the matter. Turning to Mr. Cronje, I said, "Our Government Secretary is in Potchefstrom; will you meet him? If you will agree to that, let us appoint a place of meeting, and Mr. Hudson will come and tell you the feeling of the Government." At first Cronje would not hear of such a thing, but at last Kruger persuaded him to accept the proposal, saying, "The terms are fair; you should meet him, and hear what is to be done." It was then agreed that a meeting should take place sixteen miles the other side of Potchefstrom, at the farm of Labuschagne, three or four days later. Before I left I was obliged to give a note in writing to say the agreement had been made that Cronje should meet the Colonial Secretary. I reported these matters to the Government, and told the Colonial Secretary my idea was that we were coming to blows with the Boers, as they appeared determined to fight. On the appointed day, Mr. Hudson (Colonial Secretary) went to the place of meeting with one attendant, and he repeated in substance what I had already told them. After a deal of talking, Mr. Paul Kruger took Mr. Hudson aside, and said he thought it was time he (Mr. Hudson) should leave, as the Boers were very excited; so Mr. Hudson returned to Pretoria, after being informed by the Boers that they intended to hold the meeting which they had previously arranged for the 8th of January 1881, on the 8th of December at Paarde Kraal, on the Pretoria side of Crocodile River, and about sixty miles from Potchefstrom; and Mr. Hudson promised them that they should not be molested in any way until then. Paul Kruger notified the Colonial Secretary in writing that he would not be responsible for anything that occurred. When, after the meeting, we found that the Boers were collecting in large masses, I sent (continues Commandant Kaaf) men out to report to me what was going on. These men were sent out as scouts, and through them we learned that Cronje had sent out a circular calling the Boers to assemble at Paarde Kraal, as "they were going to meet there, hoping and trusting in God that they would be able to get their freedom restored to them; if not, they would have to resort to arms, and fight to the last." Two or three days before the Boer meeting at Paarde Kraal broke up,—from the 8th December to the 13th the meeting lasted,—two of my reporters, Dr. Woite and Mr. Vanderlinden, brought in the information that the Boers were determined to fight, and that every man had taken certain oaths of allegiance to the leaders. Further, that they had been divided into different commandos, one of which was to take Heidelberg, another was to take Potchefstrom, and the third was to lie close to Pretoria. On the morning I heard that the Boers were coming to Potchefstrom I again sent out scouts, and again on the morning of the 15th December I sent out to ascertain the whereabouts of the enemy. The last party I sent out returned after an hour's absence in haste, and reported that the Boers were advancing on the town, and were then only five miles distant. At once the garrison made every preparation they could.'

In Raaf's official report I find the following additional information respecting his interview with Cronje: 'I was further told by P. Cronje, should the Government cease to demand the further payment of taxes until the meeting had taken place, they would remain quiet until then; but should the taxes be enforced, the consequences would rest with the Government, as they are determined to defend themselves with the sword. A great deal more was said against the Government as well as private people in a threatening tone of voice, which I deem unnecessary to repeat here.'

Let us see what was going on in Pretoria meanwhile. Sir Owen Lanyon, on receiving from his officers at Potchefstrom reports of the attitude of the Boers, had at last his eyes opened to the serious state of affairs, and became aware of the fact that this promised to be something more than 'a repetition of what had occurred at Middleburg.' From this moment I date the commencement of serious error on the part of the Administrator. That he ought to have foreseen the outbreak of the rebellion long before this,—as some of his critics contend,—I do not think it is just to him to say; because there is the most undoubted evidence that the Bezhuidenot affair in no way was prompted by the Boer leaders (Pretorius, Joubert, and Kruger), but it was some of the more violent men of the party who, determined to bring matters to a crisis, saw in the illegal seizure of Bezhuidenot's property an opportunity for inciting a certain section of his countrymen to defy the Government. Note Paul Kruger's words to Raaf: 'I *had* come to try to prevent bloodshed; before I came I was not aware that matters were so dark and threatening. Here you see all these men are armed, and *they* are determined to fight. I shall try and do all in my power to keep them from coming to blows; *for years I have striven to do this;* this will be the last effort I shall make. If they won't listen to me, then I must wash my hands of it.' Remember also, that so far from there being any immediate idea amongst the Boer leaders to resort to arms, their intention, publicly avowed, was to talk their wrongs over once more in January of 1881, for already a mass meeting had been called for the 8th of that month, long before the Bezhuidenot incident occurred. What was unknown to the Boer leaders it is hardly to be expected should have been known to Sir Owen Lanyon. That he never accurately gauged the feelings of the Boers, may be laid by some to his account as an error, but considering how many hundreds of men there were in the Transvaal by far and away better acquainted with the state of the country than he was, and who did not appreciate the increasing gravity of the situation, if it was a fault in Sir Owen Lanyon, he had many to share that fault with him. That he was an officer of the Imperial Government, and as such only troubled himself to obey the wishes of his superiors, and make the revenue of the country prove that the Transvaal was a paying concern, must be his excuse for ignorance of the deep-set determination of one class of the subjects he governed,—a class which he, in common with many other Englishmen, despised; a class which, in return, hated him thoroughly. With hands tied by the Government he served, Sir Owen Lanyon could do nothing for the Boers, however much he might have loved them, *except* hear their grievances and represent the true state of their feeling to the only quarter from which they could obtain redress. If he was deaf to their grievances, it was a serious fault, but he was encouraged by his superiors to play the part of the deaf man; if he did not represent to the home Government the true state of the feeling amongst the Boers, or even so much as he knew of that feeling, it was perhaps because he remembered the small encouragement given to those who brought to England bad accounts of the Transvaal, and satisfied his conscience with the belief that, as the sun was not about to cease shining, it would serve no good purpose to state, for the information of Her Majesty's Ministers, the condition of affairs amongst Boers who had been condemned to live subject to the supremacy of the Queen for ever.

What Sir Owen Lanyon did know was the defenceless state of the Transvaal, the absence of troops sufficient to arrest the spread of rebellion, unless he deluded himself with the vulgar, foolish idea that 'one Englishman is equal to ten men of any other nation.' Sir Owen Lanyon also knew this: that the Bezhuidenot verdict was a gross piece of injustice perpetrated by the Government he administered, and when his attention was called to it by the disturbance at Potchefstrom, and the subsequent demeanour of the Boers when they refused to be overawed even by the presence of British soldiers, he ought to have done what was just before he punished what was wrong. On the very low grounds of 'expediency' alone, he ought to have played a less high-handed part than that of pushing matters on to a crisis by a poor imitation of a military demonstration, when he had nothing really to back up the demonstration with. His was the fault common to military governors, an implicit belief in the supreme efficacy of battalions to set everything right; no doubt the Boer war has taught him a lesson which he will take to heart. The foe that he presumed on told off 600 of their number who for three months kept Colonel Sir Owen Lanyon, Colonel Bellairs, and every inhabitant of Pretoria, military and civilian, close prisoners in the capital. That was one effect of his military demonstration at Potchefstrom. It is a pity that that was not the only effect.

How Sir Owen Lanyon can reconcile the information he gave in his despatches to the Secretary of State for the Colonies with the information he actually received, those who are interested in his actions have yet to learn. On the 19th November, in a despatch to the Secretary of State, he held out an assurance that there was no fear of active resistance to the Queen's authority on the part of the malcontents, whereas three or four days prior to giving this assurance, he authorized civil and military officials in his province to suppress acts of violence already occurring. After the 25th November, at least, Sir Owen Lanyon was in a very direct and authoritative manner forewarned of the risks he was running, for the magistrate of Potchefstrom, a well-educated Boer, wrote on the 22d of that month to the Administrator in the following terms: 'Judging from Captain Raaf's report, and the character of the Boers whom I have known for many years, I am of opinion that if a collision with them should take place, the matter will not end here, but a general rising may be expected.'

Colonel Lanyon, above all other British administrators of the Transvaal, showed a facility of making himself disagreeable to the Boers, which was only equalled by the facility with which he believed what suited Colonel Lanyon. He tried to command the Transvaal when he failed to govern it or to manage it; having no sympathy with the Boers, save that which the aristocrat has for the *sans-culottes*, he despised them and theirs as an inferior creation to Colonel Lanyon and his; the only wonder is, that, holding the people in such low esteem, he did not refuse to act as their Governor. Surrounded in Pretoria by officials for the most part of his own selection, he never thought it worth while to look over the edge of the narrow groove he lived in. His rule was directed more to satisfy Downing Street than to satisfy the people he was appointed to govern.

I find it recorded that on the 7th of December the Government at Pretoria put their heads together and did make some peaceful overtures to the Boers. The words read like some choice lines out of a farce: 'The Government said that they were prepared to grant any reasonable requests in the direction of representative institutions, the Queen's supremacy being recognised.' On the 7th of December 1880, that was thought of once more; it had been promised so often, and the promise had been just so regularly broken, that had the Boers paid any more attention to it than they would to the garrulity of an old woman, they would indeed have been worthy of Lanyon's contempt. This time-honoured broken promise, now put forward for the fiftieth time of asking, was the result of a resolution brought forward by Mr. White, one of the members of the Legislative Council, who, with a few other men, advised Sir Owen to take steps to 'pacify the Boers.'

With what measure of contempt Sir Owen Lanyon's Government regarded any movement or desire not emanating from Government House, Pretoria, even when British power was tottering in the Transvaal, may be gathered from some remarks addressed by the Attorney-General in reply to Mr. White's appeal for progress and freedom. Mr. Morcom said in a deliberative assembly of the country, which was open to the ear of the people :—'The honourable member for Pretoria has referred to recent proceedings which have taken place in this country, and to the persons who have taken part therein as struggling for freedom. I will not allow an observation of that kind to pass unchallenged in this House. Those who resist the lawfully constituted authorities of this country are not to be designated as strugglers for freedom. I state, and that without fear of contradiction, that there is more freedom in this country than ever there was before; and if the recent action which has taken place at Potchefstrom is to bring this country to the state which it was in before the annexation,—when every man did what was right in his own eyes, when no man paid his taxes, and the treasury was empty,—it is the outcome of that opposition to constituted authority which is to be found among a portion of the inhabitants of this country. It is the same sentiment which influenced the men of Middleburg in 1877 to oppose the installation of a new Landdrost there, and the Government now, as then, will see that the *lawfully constituted* authorities of this country are duly respected.'

Is it necessary to say any more to prove that Sir Owen Lanyon's so-called administration was a miserable failure; and that that failure was the result of natural ignorance at the outset of his Transvaal career, supplemented by wilful ignorance at the close, or are his visionary convictions written with his own pen sufficient to establish the fact? In my humble opinion, they are more than sufficient registers of his own impotence.

The Boers at their meeting at Paarde Kraal demanded 'the restoration of the South African Republic under a British protectorate:—(*a*) If necessary, the British to be paid by the South African Republic; (*b*) once a year the British flag to be hoisted; (*c*) the South African Republic to be powerless to make treaties with foreign countries; (*d*) questions of native policy, railway schemes, etc., to be determined by an assembly of delegates from all the colonies of South Africa.'

In justice to Sir Owen Lanyon, to show how he was encouraged, if not urged on in the course he pursued, I should mention that on the 15th December a public meeting was held in Pretoria, at which some wise man brought forward a motion: 'Whereas Government cannot hold communication with armed bodies, that a deputation be sent from this meeting to endeavour to induce the Boers to seek for representative government under the present British authority.' To this Mr. C. K. White (and it is singular to mark the change in his attitude) proposed an amendment: 'That no deputation be sent to the Boers, but that the Government be requested to *put down* the rebellion immediately.' The amendment was carried, the former proposition rejected. That sealed the fate of British rule in the Transvaal, if it had not been already sealed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INCEPTION OF THE STRUGGLE.

THE first shot fired was, just as had been the previous occurrences which brought matters to a climax, the act of one man who forced the hand of his fellow-men.

The Boers at Paarde Kraal determined to make a formal declaration of their independence on 'Dingaan's Day,' the 16th of December, and to be able to effect this they wished to have their proclamation only put in print. At Potchefstrom was the nearest and only available office, owned by one Borrious who was in sympathy with them; but in Potchefstrom at this time there was also a force of British soldiers. The Boers, therefore, sent an armed force there with instructions to compel the printer to do the work they required, and then to return to the camp at Paarde Kraal.

The Boer leaders have tried to make some capital out of the assertion that the British fired the first shot, and so brought about the war. That statement is absolutely untrue, but probably the untruth was not told wilfully. There is no doubt whatever that some of the more headstrong of Cronje's men, and who were bent on bloodshed, fired at our men. I reproduce the account as it was told me at Potchefstrom by persons who were eye-witnesses of the occurrence, not those who were in the town and went by hearsay.

When the troops arrived in Potchefstrom, Major Winslow and Major Thornhill selected a site for a camp outside the town, about 500 yards away from its western boundary, on the open rising ground; along this runs a stream which supplies water to the town. The gaol is in view of the camp or earthwork which was thrown up, and it was between the gaol and the fort that the first shot was fired.

When Raaf's messengers returned on the 15th November with the news that the Boers in force were within a short distance of the town and marching upon it, a hurried council of war was held, and the troops told off to different posts. In the Market Square (at the end of the town nearest the fort), in the Landdrost's Court, twenty of the 21st Fusiliers under Captain Falls, and forty-two civilian volunteers under Raaf, were placed. Major Clarke, civil commissioner, who had come down to Potchefstrom immediately after the return of Mr. Hudson to the capital, was also in the Court House, and as senior officer took command of the garrison there. The garrison in camp consisted of 140 men of the Fusiliers, a proportion of artillerymen to the two Armstrong nine-pounders under Major Thornhill, with Colonel Winslow chief in command. The gaol was occupied by about twenty of the Fusiliers; in this there were some twelve or more prisoners undergoing sentences. The prison, which is a stone building, was barricaded at weak points by sandbags, and the Court House, which is a brick building, and had a thatched roof, was also hastily put in a fair state of defence. The fort, an earthwork, was, with the other strongholds, as well supplied with provisions as the limited time at disposal would admit; and from the magazine, a separate building between the fort and graveyard, the ammunition was removed and distributed. The magazine itself was occupied as an outpost by a party from the fort.

In this earthwork, twenty-five yards square, several gentlemen from the town, with their wives and families, took shelter. Tins of meat, sacks of maize, biscuit-boxes, and other stores, were used to strengthen the work, which was in an incomplete state when the alarming news was received. On the afternoon of January 15, about one o'clock, 500 mounted Boers came into the town, and took possession of Borrious' printing-office, which is in the centre of the main street, and out of sight of any of the positions held by our troops. They stationed pickets about the place, guarding the entrances to the Market Square. Our party then occupied, be it understood, the Landdrost's office, commanding the square where these pickets halted. Major Clarke and Raaf rode up to the Boers, and the Major asked for their leader. Raaf was told by Cronje (brother of the commandant), 'If you will take my advice, you will go away at once.' 'This (to use Raaf's own narrative) I interpreted to Major Clarke, who requested me to repeat the question—that he must see their commandant. I was answered in the same words as before by the Boer, Cronje. We then returned to the Court House, and Major Clarke sent notice in writing to the printer, Borrious, that if he printed any seditious document, he would be held responsible. To the townspeople on the Market Square a notice was also sent, that in the event of any firing on the Market Square, they might find protection in the fort, as they would be in danger of our guns if they remained there. Later in the day it was discovered that the Boers had taken complete possession of the principal streets of the town. People attempting to pass to and fro were stopped by the Boers, and not allowed to communicate even from house to house. The information was given to those in the Court House that the enemy were printing a proclamation or declaration of independence, and that they intended next morning to come up in a body to the Court House, take possession of it, and read their proclamation. Major Clarke was absent from the Court House when this news was brought in, so I went to ask him what my orders were in case the Boers came to the Court House. I met him, and while explaining the matter, I heard two shots fired in the direction of the fort. In a moment or two we saw two Dutchmen racing down hatless from the direction of the camp.'

To continue the story, I will now give Dr. Sketchley's account, as an eye-witness, of this firing: 'On the 16th December last, we had just finished breakfast at the fort when the Boers came near. Colonel Winslow was thirty yards from the fort; some of the ladies were walking about outside—one lady was at least 500 yards from the fort; the soldiers were sitting on the parapets. All at once eight or nine Boers, mounted and armed, came from the town past the gaol. Lieutenant Hay and others who were with him there, have told me that as they passed the Boers jeered at them, calling them cowardly *rooi baatjes.* "We defy you to fight"; and one Boer, who spoke English well, called out, "Why don't you fight, you damned cowards?" They came within 300 yards of the fort, every man with his rifle cocked. Colonel Winslow then said, "We can't stand this"; and he gave the order to Lieutenant Lonsdale, who was in charge of the mounted infantry, to advance with thirteen men, and ask them what they wanted, and what their intentions were. Our men saddled up, and rode towards the Boers, who immediately turned their horses' heads, and galloped back to town. Our men followed them. When they got about forty yards from the edge of the town towards the first street, five or six Boers, who lay concealed behind a wall, opened fire upon them. Our men then dismounted, and fired on the Boers, who were galloping away, and they wounded one man. The Boers who had fired on our soldiers retreated towards the centre of the town after they had fired. I saw myself the whole affair; our mounted men were never out of my sight, and I am certain they never fired until the Boers in ambush had fired upon them. There was not the slightest doubt in the world about it. At least fifty of our men saw the whole affair.'

Colonel Winslow, Major Thornhill, and every officer present witnessed this occurrence, and there is therefore not the slightest doubt in the world that the first shot was fired by the enemy. Of the details of the siege of Potchefstrom an account had perhaps better be reserved till later on. The fort and positions occupied by our troops were closely invested, the town taken possession of by the enemy, and all communication with Pretoria or elsewhere effectually closed. The war had commenced.

When at last Sir Owen Lanyon discovered, previous to these occurrences, that matters were assuming a dangerous aspect, he telegraphed to Sir George Colley, who was then in Natal, urging him to send, with all possible despatch, reinforcements to the Transvaal, and meanwhile issued the following minute, which made the Boer leaders very wroth because they were classed amongst 'misguided men':—

'It has been brought to my notice that certain misguided men, living in the neighbourhood of Potchefstrom, have recently defied the authority of the officers of the Landdrost's Court there, and have with force and violence taken out of the custody of the messenger of the Court a certain wagon which had been lawfully attached in execution of a judgment of the Court.

'It also appears that the said wagon was taken away under circumstances which must form the subject of a judicial investigation.

'It further appears that the party which removed the wagon was under the guidance or leadership of certain foremen.

'That warrants for the arrest of certain of these men for their unlawful acts on the occasion referred to have been issued.

'That a party of Her Majesty's subjects in this province has sheltered the men against whom the warrants have been issued, and by force and violence has prevented the duly authorized officers of the law from executing these warrants; and that a meeting of certain of Her Majesty's subjects has been convened for the purpose of considering, as it is alleged, among other things, whether these men shall be given up to justice, or whether the authority of the law and its officers, shall be further defied.

'I desire, therefore, to draw the attention of these people to the very serious responsibilities which they incur when thus acting in open defiance of the law.

'I need not remind them that Her Majesty's Government neither can nor will suffer such conduct to go unpunished.

'I therefore desire to warn the leaders and advisers of these men, who are invited to attend a meeting on the 8th instant, for the purpose, as it is alleged, of considering the advisability or otherwise of further and continued resistance to the law, that they and all others concerned will be held responsible, in person and property, for their action in this matter.

'It is needless to reassure the quietly-disposed inhabitants of this province that the Government will see that the law is respected.

'Those who may suffer from the unlawful and wrongful acts of any individuals or bodies of men will know how to make such men personally responsible. The Government will know how to maintain its authority and vindicate the law.

'I append hereto and direct attention to three paragraphs from a proclamation issued by His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, K.C.M.G., on the 11th March 1878:—

'"Now, therefore, I do call upon, enjoin, and strictly charge all peaceably disposed and orderly persons to aid the officers of the Government in maintaining order, and in bringing to justice the seditious agitators who have endeavoured, and are still endeavouring, to mislead the people of the Transvaal to commit a breach of the public peace, and acts of sedition against Her Majesty's Government, thereby bringing serious misfortune upon the country and its inhabitants; and I do further hereby warn all such mischievous and evil-disposed persons, as may be found to be fomenting or instigating any such unlawful agitation, and who, by threats, seditious words, whether spoken, written, or printed, or by any other means, are engaged in inciting the people of this country to acts of disloyalty, sedition, resistance to, or rebellion against the Government, that they are hereby made and held liable and subject, under the law and this my proclamation, to imprisonment, fine, and such other and further punishments as the law may direct.

'"And I do also hereby make known that all meetings convened for seditious or any other unlawful purpose whatever, at which are proposed, discussed, or passed any resolution or resolutions aiming to weaken, resist, or oppose the power and authority of the Government, or to incite the taking up of arms by the people of this country against the said Government, or in any way whatsoever tending to disturb the peace of this country, are contrary to law. And I do warn all persons attending such unlawful and seditious meetings, and more especially the conveners thereof, and all such who by word of mouth or otherwise do encourage and incite to unlawful or rebellious acts such persons so met together, that they render themselves liable to the punishments and penalties set forth in the foregoing section of this my proclamation.

'"And I do hereby call upon and command all officers, civil and military, and more especially all Landdrosts, Justices of the Peace, field-cornets, and other officers of the law, to aid and strenuously exert themselves in the execution of the provisions of the law and of this my proclamation, as they shall answer to the contrary at their peril."

'And in reference to the protests which have been made against the action taken by the Government to ensure the due payment of taxes by all classes of the community, and in reference to the refusal of some of Her Majesty's subjects to pay those amounts which are due and payable by them under the laws long since enacted by the Volksraad for the imposition of taxation, I have to point out that the Government can and will draw no distinction between those who willingly pay and those who express their unwillingness to pay. It is the duty of the Government to see that the laws are rigidly enforced and equally administered, and that duty will be discharged.

'It is therefore well for those who refuse to pay their taxes to be reminded that, in the event of their taxes remaining unpaid, legal proceedings will be taken to enforce their payment, and in the event of the judgments of the law courts remaining otherwise unsatisfied, the farms or other landed property of all defaulters will be liable to be sold in execution.

'The Government earnestly trusts that the good sense of the people will render unnecessary proceedings of this nature, and that they will carry out their obligations to the State in accordance with its laws.

'It is to the advantage of the country, and in the interests of the people, that they should be assured that it is Her Majesty's most gracious intention that her supremacy in this province shall be maintained, and the local Government will adopt any measures which may, in their opinion, be necessary to ensure obedience to the law, respect for its officers, and the maintenance of the authority of the British Crown.

'W. OWEN LANYON, Administrator.

'GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PRETORIA,
December 6, 1880.'

On the 15th December the following Government notice was issued in the *Pretoria Gazette*:—

'As the arrival of any number of armed men in the villages of the province, for many reasons, might prove dangerous and entirely unlawful, and might endanger the public peace, and bearing in mind the difficulty to control such armed gatherings of people, His Excellency the Administrator wishes it to be notified that all armed parties of people shall be forbidden to approach any village in the province within a mile, or to enter the same. By order of His Excellency, 'G. HUDSON.'

On the 16th December the following district orders, signed by Mr. Churchhill, Captain D.A.A. and Q.M.G., were published:—

'PRETORIA, *December* 16, 1880.

'Attention is called to Government Notice No. 264, published in the *Transvaal Government Gazette* Extraordinary, dated yesterday, forbidding the approach of any armed body of men within a mile of any town in the province. Officers commanding stations will be guided accordingly; and having due regard to their order, never to endanger the safety of their posts through over-weakening their garrison, they will endeavour to carry out the spirit of the instructions conveyed in the notice, and prevent such approach of any unauthorized hostile armed body of men.'

'PRETORIA, *December* 16, 1880.

'During the present disturbed state of the country, seventy rounds of ammunition will be carried by each soldier, and whenever likely to become hotly engaged, and conveyance for the regimental reserve not to be at hand, thirty rounds extra will be issued and carried on the person of each man.'

These notices have been freely pointed at by the Boers as evidence of an intention of the Administrator to take advantage of the first opportunity to shed blood.

On Dingaan's Day, the Boer leaders at Paarde Kraal, not knowing what had taken place at Potchefstrom at that time, sent a copy of their proclamation to Sir Owen Lanyon under cover of this letter :—

'EXCELLENCY,—In the name of the people of the S. A. Republic, we come to you to fulfil an earnest but irresistible duty. We have the honour to send you a copy of the proclamation promulgated by the Government and Volksraad, and universally published. The mind of the people is clearly to be seen, and requires no explanation. We declare in the most solemn manner that we have no desire to spill blood, and that from our side we do not wish war. It lies in your hands to force us to appeal to arms in self-defence, which may God forbid. If it comes so far, we will do so with the deepest reverence for Her Majesty the Queen of England and her flag. Should it come so far, we will defend ourselves with a knowledge that we are struggling for the honour of Her Majesty, for we struggle (fight) for the sanctity of the treaties sworn by her but broken by her officers. However, the time for complaint has passed, and we wish alone from your Excellency's co-operation for an amicable solution of the question upon which we differ. From the last paragraph of our proclamation, your Excellency will see the firm and unchangeable will of the people to co-operate with the English Government in everything that tends to the progress of South Africa. However, the only conditions upon which to arrive at that are set forth in said proclamation, and clothed with good reasons. In 1877, our then Government gave up the keys of the Government offices without spilling blood. We trust that your Excellency, as representative of the whole British nation, will not less nobly, and in the same way, place our Government in a position to assume the administration. We expect your answer within twenty-four hours. We have the honour to be, your Excellency's obedient servants,

'S. J. P. Kruger.
'M. W. Pretorius.
'P. J. Joubert, Vice-President and Triumvirate.
'J. P. Max.
'C. J. Joubert.
'E. J. P. Jorissen.
'W. Edward Bok, Acting State Secretary.

'Heidelberg, *December* 16, 1880.'

The manifesto which accompanied the foregoing was a very long document, from which it is only necessary to make a few extracts, commencing in this strain: 'In the name of the people of the South African Republic, under aspect to God, we, S. J. P. Kruger, Vice-President, M. W. Pretorius, and P. J. Joubert, appointed by the Volksraad in its sitting of 13th December 1880, as a Triumvirate, to carry on a Provisional Government, make known and publish.' It proceeded to quote the Sand River Convention and the minutes of the Volksraad and Sir Theophilus Shepstone's proclamation at the time of the annexation, and then followed this argument:—

'12. Three and a half years have since that time passed, and the people have behaved quietly, always contending that they were a free people, and no subjects of Her Majesty; in the confidence that Her Majesty's Government would subject the actions of her officials to a serious consideration, and meantime, out of regard for its laws, co-operating with the Government *pro tem.*, to honour these laws, faithfully attending, as for instance as jurymen, to further the application of the laws.

'13. This leniency of the people has been badly rewarded. Two deputations sent in 1877 and 1878 to England have been well received, but not been allowed to lay before Her Majesty s Government the subject of annexation.

'14. When, after the commencement of the unjustifiable Zulu war, which war might easily have been avoided, the High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, visited our country, this high official tried to persuade the people to desist from its resistance, but in vain. A camp of more than 4000 burghers sent its representatives, and His Excellency was necessitated to acknowledge openly that the objections of burghers to the annexation was more general than was represented to him by the officials, and that the leaders of the movement were the best and most principal people of the country.

'15. Sir Bartle Frere took from the hands of the people a memorial to Her Majesty the Queen, wherein it was stated unreservedly that the people would not be subject to Her Majesty, and he accompanied this memorial by a despatch, wherein he declared that the representations of the people were worthy of the most serious consideration of Her Majesty's Government. He read this despatch for approbation to the Commission of the people, and the thousands of burghers, this time believing that their good right had at last found a defender, went peacefully back to their occupation.

'16. Meantime said high official, in a private letter to Her Majesty's Secretary for the Colonies, wrote that he regretted not to have sufficient artillery to chase this camp home. This letter had been written in the same days that he had the interview with the people.

'17. The Government of Her Majesty, misled by her High Commissioner, has never given an answer to his memorial of the people. And when Sir Garnet Wolseley reached our boundary, he expressed as the general feeling of England's Government, that knew not of the state of affairs, that "as long as the sun shines the Transvaal will remain British territory."

'18. The answer of the people upon this declaration is contained in the resolutions of the general meeting of the people, which took place from 10th to 17th December 1879, when it was decided that there being no hope of recovering the independence by peaceful means, that the Volksraad should be convened to proclaim what has now been proclaimed and finally decided: that the people declares that, with the help of God, it demands a strong form of the S. A. Republic, respect for the laws, the prosperity and progress of the country, and that it promises man for man to co-operate for that purpose, and to defend the Government until death. So truly help us, God Almighty!

'19. The Committee gave, moreover, official notice to Sir Garnet Wolseley, with request to communicate same to English Government. This request was answered by an accusation of high treason against the President, Mr. M. W. Pretorius, and the Secretary, Mr.

E. Bok. It is generally known that these accusations have been dropped, and have alone had to do service to create fear.

'20. The meeting announced in these resolutions has been delayed, as we trusted that by a deputation to the Cape Colony the threatening danger of a Conference, the precursor of a Confederation of all Colonies in South Africa, where our interests would for ever have been neglected, might be averted. This deputation has done good, and established in South Africa the conviction that no Conference is possible without the injury done to us being first repaired.

'21. Meantime, the peace observed by the people has been continually and purposely misrepresented. The people had decreed to pay its taxes only under protest or by force, whilst the Government for the time being has thought well to write to England that the people were satisfied, and paid their taxes.

'22. Upon these statements the English Parliament, in September last, has allowed the matter of the annexation to go unchallenged, because her Majesty's Government declared that the Administrator reported the opposition of the people abating, and that they paid their taxes.

'23. Deceived by such reports from Pretoria, His Excellency Sir Pomeroy Colley, Her Majesty's Governor for Natal, no later than the 19th October 1880, declared, at the opening of the Legislative Council in that colony, that the movement in the Transvaal was apparently settling, that everywhere order and law reigned, and that the taxes were paid by natives as well as the white inhabitants.

'24. Indescribable was the anger of the people when they saw that, purposely and wilfully, the truth was obscured by the authorities in Pretoria, and that the unwilling and extorted payment of taxes was used as a weapon against the people.

'25. Immediately the people gathered, and from all sides declarations were signed by the burghers that they should either pay no longer taxes or alone under protest, exercising their rights as an independent people, that may be silent for a time, but reserves its rights.

'26. This declaration was printed in the newspapers, and the Government in Pretoria, afraid, doubtless, that now the untruth of its information should come to light, has crowned its work of tyranny by prosecuting criminally for the publication of seditious writing the editor of the paper who published those declarations. The liberty of the press was a thorn in the side of the Government *pro tem.*

'27. The unwillingness of the people to pay taxes led to small collisions. Yet everything was still done by the leaders of the people to prevent a public disturbance of the peace. With the full approval of the Colonial Secretary and Mr. Kruger, it was decided to try whether the people's meeting, which was near at hand, could not effect the peaceful solution of the difficulties.

'28. That the Government at Pretoria has thought it well, in contradiction to this agreement between Mr. Hudson, the Colonial Secretary, and Mr. Paul Kruger, and two days before the meeting, to publish a proclamation, which leaves us no choice between being treated as rebels or exercise our eternal rights as a free people.

'29. We have decided, and the people has shown to us our path. We declare before God, who knows the heart, and before the world: Any one speaking of us as rebels is a slanderer! The people of the South African Republic have never been subjects of Her Majesty, and never will be.

'30. We therefore return to the protest of the Government referred to above, and declare that on our part the last means have been tried to ensure the rights of the people by peaceful means and amicable arrangements.

'31. We therefore make it known to everybody, that on the 13th of December 1880 the Government has been re-established. Mr. S. J. P. Kruger has been appointed Vice-President, and shall form, with Mr. M. W. Pretorius and P. Joubert, the Triumvirate that shall execute the government of the country. The Volksraad has recommenced its sitting.

'32. All inhabitants of this country who will keep themselves under the protection of the laws shall stand under the protection of the laws. The people declares to be forgiving to all burghers of the South African Republic who by circumstances have been brought to desert for the time being the part of the people, but that it cannot promise to extend this forgiveness to those burghers of the South African Republic who assume the position of open enemies to the people, and continue to deceive the English Government by their untruthful representations.

'33. All officials who serve the Government now, and who are able and willing to serve under the altered circumstances of the country, shall have a claim to retain their places and such advantages as their positions now afford to them.

'34. To the English Government the right is reserved to maintain in our country a Consul or Diplomatic Agent to represent the interests of British subjects.

'35. The lawful expenditure lawfully incurred for the necessary expenditure during the interregnum shall be confirmed.

'36. The differences over boundaries of natives shall be submitted to arbitration.

'37. For the native policy the Government is prepared to accept general principles to be decided upon after deliberation with the Colonies and States of South Africa.

'And, finally, we declare and make known to all and everybody, that from this day the country is declared to be in a state of siege and under the provision of martial law.

'The Triumvirate, 'S. J. P. KRUGER, Vice-President.
'M. W. PRETORIUS.
'P. S. JOUBERT.
'W. E. BOK, Acting State Secretary.

'PAARDE KRAAL, PRETORIA, *December* 1880.'

The news of the outbreak of hostilities at Potchefstrom was at first discredited by Sir Owen Lanyon: the news of the affair at Bronkhurst or the Madder Spruit came like a thunder-clap upon one and all at Pretoria. Whilst the Boer messenger who carried these despatches to the Government was on his way to the capital, the Boer leaders heard that some 300 men of the 94th Regiment were marching from Middleburg to Pretoria, and an armed force of Boers was detailed to intercept them, as also to arrest the march of Captain Froome with two companies of the same regiment and one of the 94th from Wakkerstroom (or Marthinus Wesselstroom, as its correct name is) to Standerton. To the commanding officers of both parties, the Boers sent a notice warning them not to proceed farther on their march until a reply should be received by the South African Republic of the intentions of the British Government. A disregard of this warning of the South African Republic they were told would be taken as a *casus belli*. Captain Froome reached Standerton without being molested, and promptly entrenched himself there; *en route* he had taken every precaution against surprise, and the forced marches he made, whereby he gained Standerton in an incredibly short space of time, alone saved him from attack. How it fared with the headquarters of his regiment marching on Pretoria, may be told now, to maintain the continuity of the story.

PART II.

THE BATTLEFIELDS.

CHAPTER V.

THE BRONKHURST SPRUIT ENGAGEMENT.

BEFORE leaving Middleburg, Colonel Anstruther was warned by the Barrett Brothers and other Englishmen, to whom the intentions of the enemy had been reported by some of the Boers friendly disposed towards them, that he would be attacked *en route.* His answer was that of a brave soldier: he would take care of himself and men, and if the Boers did attack him, the 94th would render a good account of itself. Colonel Anstruther, it is evident, considered the warnings of the Middleburg English residents as of an alarmist order; however, he took what he thought sufficient precautionary measures to prevent a surprise. His force comprised five officers, two hundred and thirty rank and file, one commissariat officer, one conductor and five men, one surgeon and three Army Hospital Corps orderlies. The wagon train accompanying the column consisted of thirty ox-wagons, besides water-carts, ambulances, etc.

Of all methods of transport, the least desirable for the service of a column on the march in a hostile country, is the cumbersome ox-wagon of South Africa. Drawn by sixteen or eighteen bullocks, two abreast, a span of oxen with its wagon covers a distance of at least thirty yards. Allowing for a certain interval between each wagon, it may be reckoned that the train accompanying the headquarters of the 94th did not cover a less extent of ground than a mile and a quarter, even when in 'close order.' In the month of December (the rainy season), however, the roads would be very heavy, and when that is the case, mud holes and other impediments render it impossible for much order of distance being kept between the conveyances. One wagon sticks and blocks up the way of those behind it; those in front proceed, not knowing how soon their turn may come for an enforced halt, or how slight or serious may be the stoppage of those behind. If the obstacle cannot be got over by ten minutes' thrashing of the oxen, and swaying them first on this side and then on that, a span is taken out of a wagon behind and hitched on in front of the powerless team. If thirty-two oxen won't pull through the mess, forty-eight will. All these shiftings and tries back occupy time, and disorganize any attempts at maintaining regularity of distance.

The day after leaving Middleburg, the 20th December, Colonel Anstruther was informed that a 'friendly' meeting of Boers was being held close by the road, and that Boer emissaries were trying to stir the people up to oppose his march, but the people would not respond. All went well on this day, till about 2.30 P.M., when the following was about the order of march:—One mounted infantry man in advance of the main body next the band; of F Company forty men, of A Company forty men; then followed the quarter-guard thirteen men, and provost-escort and prisoners twenty-three men. The remainder of the force was posted along the string of wagons, with the exception of the rear-guard of about twenty men, which was some distance behind. Colonel Anstruther, Captains Nairne and Elliott, Lieutenant Hume, and Adjutant Harrison were riding just in front of the band when suddenly Boers appeared all round. The locality that the regiment had reached at the time was one where stood several farms, and the trees surrounding these homesteads afforded cover under which a hostile force could assemble without being perceived from a distance. On the right was a ravine with wood in it, and amongst that the Boers were lying in ambush. How unexpected was the appearance of a force of Boers to the English may be judged from the fact that the band of the regiment was playing at the time. Colonel Anstruther, immediately he caught sight of the enemy on the crest of a slight rise to the front, called a halt, and the order was passed to the rear for the wagons to close up. Before this could be done a messenger from the enemy, carrying a white flag, came forward and handed the Colonel a note signed by Piet Joubert, and countersigned by other Boer leaders, desiring him to halt where he was until a reply had been received from Sir Owen Lanyon to the *ultimatum* the Boers had addressed to him. The message also contained the warning that if the soldiers advanced beyond a small stream in front of them, it would be taken as a declaration of war. Colonel Anstruther, with Conductor Egerton, had ridden out in front of the advance-guard to meet this flag of truce; after he had read the message, the carrier of it informed him verbally that two minutes were allowed for his decision. Colonel Anstruther verbally replied that he should march on to Pretoria, and, to use his own words, as published in his despatch written just before he died, the Boer messenger 'said that he would take my message to the Commandant-General; and I asked him to let me know the result, to which he nodded assent. Almost immediately, however, the enemy's line advanced.'

Whilst this short parley was going on every effort was being made in the rear to get the wagons up, but without much good result, because when the Boers opened fire the rear-guard would be at least half a mile behind the head of the column. Even those who were guarding the wagons had not time to join the main body. When Colonel Anstruther saw the Boers advancing, he gave the order to his men to extend in skirmishing order, but before they could open out to more than loose files they were met with a murderous volley, and at the same moment Boers on right and left flank and in the rear picked off every man within sight. Our men returned the fire as best they could, but in less than ten minutes 120 were either killed or wounded, besides a large proportion of the oxen in the wagons shot. The officers, who exposed themselves fearlessly, were picked off almost immediately by the Boer marksmen. Captain Nairne, Lieutenant M'Sweeney, Lieutenant and Adjutant Harrison, Lieutenant Hume, Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Carter, Conductor Egerton, Surgeon Ward, were all wounded, besides Colonel Anstruther himself, who was shot in two or three places.

It was useless to contend against such odds, and the 'cease-fire' was sounded and handkerchiefs waved to denote submission. During this unequal struggle, Mrs. Smith, the widow of the bandmaster of the regiment, who, with the wife of Sergeant-Major Fox and some children, were riding in one of the foremost wagons, came fearlessly up to where the wounded lay, and tearing strips from her clothing, helped the surgeon to bandage the wounds. The sergeant-major's wife was severely wounded, as also was Fox himself. There was no lack of heroism during those awful ten minutes, whilst men were being shot down like dogs. Lieutenant Harrison was shot through the head while cheering on his men;

Lieutenant Hume was equally conspicuous for his coolness. An orderly-room clerk named Maistre and the Sergeant-Master Tailor Pears quietly concealed the regimental colours in a wagon-box when they saw the danger of them falling into the hands of the enemy; and their work was not in vain, as Conductor Egerton managed subsequently to wrap them round his body under his tunic, and having obtained permission after the fight was over to walk to Pretoria for medical assistance, he carried them safely to the capital, as well as the disastrous news of the engagement. Forty-two miles traversed by a wounded man on foot in eleven hours is in itself a feat worth mentioning, and one the value of which can only be really estimated by those who know what South African roads are in a rainy season.

As soon as our force surrendered, Franz Joubert, who had been in command of the Boers, and who it is said fired the first shot, with the exclamation, 'What is the use of waiting?' came forward with some of his men, and on finding poor Colonel Anstruther severely wounded, expressed sorrow. The Boers after this engagement, as after every other during the war, behaved kindly to the prisoners and wounded. Some of the captured wagons were loaded up with the arms and accoutrements of our men, and were immediately sent away to the Boer camp. Those whose wounds did not permit their removal immediately to a distance, were taken to neighbouring farmhouses. Colonel Anstruther did not survive his injuries many days; in him the 94th lost a commander admired and loved by one and all.

Whether the affair of Bronkhurst Spruit can be called an act of treachery on the part of the Boers, is rather a nice question. Colonel Anstruther's words—the words of a dying man—rather go to prove that he was unfairly treated, though he does not say so directly. He was given to understand by the messenger who came with the flag of truce that another communication would be made to him as soon as his reply to the request to halt had been reported to the Boer commandant. The only reply given him was 'a murderous volley.' The Boers cannot lay claim to much bravery or superiority (except in numbers) over our soldiers in this fight. Theirs was a deliberately planned ambush to entrap men who had no idea that they were marching in an enemy's country. Bronkhurst Spruit engagement is the one during the whole of the war which does not redound to the credit of the

Dutch, even if it does not reflect great discredit upon them. If a reasonable time had been allowed Colonel Anstruther to give his reply, the 94th could not then say, as they do say and will say, that they were treacherously surprised. 'Two minutes' looks, under the circumstances, very much like an idle pretence of fair dealing to cover an intentional act of cowardice which subsequent conduct could hardly palliate. The Boers say that they had not more men than were marching with the 94th on that occasion; that statement is worth very little, considering the evidence of our officers, and above all the harsh evidence of facts that the 94th was from advance-guard to rear-guard practically surrounded and outnumbered in every direction.

It is stated in reference to this engagement that Lieutenant M'Sweeney met his death by an accident, having been shot by one of his own men. Lieutenant M'Sweeney was in the act of jumping down from a wagon, under which some soldiers had taken cover, when one of the men fired at the enemy, not knowing, of course, that the lieutenant was jumping off in front of the muzzle of his gun; the ball entered his back, mortally wounding him. Lieutenant M'Sweeney, before he died, declared that the sad event was a pure accident, and that the man who fired, whether dead or alive, was in no way responsible for it.

Dr. Crow, who was sent out by Surgeon-Major Skeen from Pretoria to attend to the wounded at this scene of the disaster, has given an account of his three months' experience amongst the Boers, which I take the liberty of reproducing. He writes:—

'Surgeon-Major Skeen lost no time in sending to the scene of disaster Surgeon-Major Comerford, Dr. Harvey Crow, one sergeant and six men of the Army Hospital Corps, accompanied by two ambulance and one baggage wagon, and when passing the convent the Rev. Father Meyer joined the party. Our progress was as speedy as mules and bad roads would permit; but, overtaken by night, we were forced to outspan at Botha's Nek, a rugged and difficult pass. Here for the first time we saw Boers armed, about twelve, travelling in different directions. Next morning's dawn saw us on our journey, and ere long the white tents of the camp appeared in the distance, nestling amongst numerous mimosa trees.

'When close to the camp we were met by Surgeon Ward, who was glad to see us, and who was looking remarkably fresh, considering that he had been many hours without rest or food, and suffering from a flesh wound on the thigh. No doubt his duties, so numerous and varied, prevented him thinking of himself; and when the amount of work he had done, and done so well, with little or no assistance, is considered, he deserves the greatest praise.

'We at once accompanied him to the tent where the Colonel lay, suffering from five wounds, having been wounded at the first volley; still he managed to give orders, though he had received his death-wound. He evinced the greatest satisfaction and pleasure when informed that Mr. Egerton had succeeded in taking the colours safely to Pretoria. We next saw Lieutenant Hume, who lay dangerously wounded. He, while directing his men, received a wound on the head, causing him to fall; but he was soon up, sword in hand, encouraging his company, but a bullet passed through his left shoulder, causing him to fall a second time. The men speak highly of this gallant young officer for coolness and courage.

'We next visited Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Carter, and found that he was shot through the lower third of the right thigh, through the hand, and had two wounds on the right chest. In ninety similar cases out of one hundred the wounds would have proved fatal very soon after their receipt, but an excellent physique and a strong constitution was fighting grim death as bravely as he fought the foe for Queen and country.

'Mrs. Fox, who lay dangerously wounded, was attended by her husband, Sergeant-Major Fox, who was also wounded.

'The tents containing the wounded soldiers we visited *seriatim* as quickly as possible, and without entering into details, but briefly stating that the Boers left a certain number of tents and unwounded to attend the wounded and assist at the camp; that in a tent, which may be taken to convey the description of the tents, six or seven wounded lay (exclusive of orderlies), suffering from every description of gunshot wounds, some mortally, others more or less dangerously wounded. Those who could, willingly assisted the orderlies to attend to the wants of their comrades.

'Mrs. Smith, who, with her two children, so narrowly escaped, was most unremitting in attendance on the wounded, and did much to alleviate suffering, while Father Meyer was not idle in performing his duty to the dying and wounded.

'The whole day a lot of armed Boers remained at and about the camp, but with the exception of peering and poking their noses into tents, behaved well. Around the camp there was sufficient evidence where the attack took place on the main body of the regiment — helmets, music, Bibles, boots, water-bottles, cartridge belts, and every description of military equipment, were strewn about, and spots here and there were crusted with British blood.

'The Boers, it appears, surrounded our men, and they certainly had excellent cover, while our men had no cover at all, nor time to get under cover, but had to lie on a wide level road. Still those who were armed (something over 100), and were not killed or disabled by the first volley from the Boers, notwithstanding their labouring under every disadvantage as to numbers, position, cover, etc., must have done a certain amount of damage, as I counted close to the camp ten dead horses. Night came, but not till near morning did our duties for the day end, Dr. Ward attending to the last.

'As soon as possible the capital operations were performed, and the camp moved to a more healthy site. A number of the less severely wounded were sent to Pretoria, accompanied by the Rev. Father Meyer.

'On the night of the 26th December the 94th sustained a severe loss, nay the British army, by the death of Colonel Anstruther. From the receipt of his wounds till his death he never complained; calm, kind, courageous—indeed so much so, that those Boers who saw him expressed regret that such a brave and good man as the Colonel must have been should be wounded. Well might they say so; and the man who said that "the Colonel was a man in a million" was not, I think, far wrong. On the following day he was buried. Words fail to describe a scene so sad and so unique. The remains were placed on a stretcher, and carried by four sergeants, three out of the four being wounded; while the majority of those who followed were wounded, some on crutches, others wearing splints, others with bandaged heads, and some—unable to walk—were carried on the backs of their more fortunate comrades. At the grave not a dry eye could be seen, and one and all seemed to think that a friend—a good man and a soldier, in the widest and best sense of the term—was gone from their midst. But as disastrous as the late war in the Transvaal has been to British "prestige," thank God, those at Bronkhurst Spruit did their duty, and died like men—a noble example to any army.

'On the 4th of January Surgeon-Major Comerford left us for

Pretoria, taking with him ten wounded and two Army Hospital men. On the 5th Commissary Carter died about midday, and one of the 94th expired the same night.

'A wagon, which had been delayed on the road from Pretoria, arrived, containing a large supply of luxuries both for the mind and the body, which was very acceptable indeed, kindly sent by Captain Campbell to the wounded of his regiment, while Mr. Advocate Cooper also sent a large supply of books, pamphlets, etc., which wiled away many an hour pleasantly and profitably; the wounded were indeed grateful to these considerate gentlemen. On the 15th of January thirty of our men were taken to Heidelberg, guarded by a party of armed Boers. After this many Boers visited our camp, now generally coming unarmed, and with one or two exceptions behaving well. Mr. Nellmapius, the Portuguese vice-consul, visited us very frequently, always bringing a large supply of fruit, fowls, vegetables, etc.; indeed he never came but the wounded had some little extra. Mr. John Gray, of Franspoort, was also very generous and kind to the wounded. Mr. Grobler, on whose farm the disaster took place, supplied us with everything that he could spare, such as fine bread, butter, fruit, etc., as also did a Mr. Vermaak; and a few other Boers were very kind.

'On Friday, the 4th February, the Boers again removed to Heidelberg a party of ten men, all being recovered, and quite fit for the journey.

'Things became rather monotonous now, and up to the time that peace news was received, those soldiers who were convalescent did their last duty to their fallen comrades, by enclosing the graves of their deceased brethren, laying wreaths of flowers, tastefully made into beautiful devices, on their last resting-place. Still the responsibilities of commanding officer, commissariat officer, as well as professional duties, were laid on the shoulders of Surgeon Ward, but they were lightened immensely by one and all doing their duty to the utmost.

'In conclusion, I hope no one will prejudge the disaster at Bronkhurst Spruit, or lay any blame to the officers and men, when it is remembered that all the officers who accompanied the regiment from Leydenburg were killed, except two (Dr. Ward and Lieutenant Hume), and that about half who were hit are also dead, the remainder having, on an average, five wounds per man, a thing hitherto unknown in modern warfare. If any stain has been cast on the British flag in the Transvaal, the gallant 94th did all that was possible by their deeds at Bronkhurst Spruit to obliterate it.

'While taking leave of the 94th, the best wish that can be expressed is, that they may have a colonel like, or as near as possible, Colonel Anstruther, and officers like those who fell; and may the men possess the excellent physique which won for them the deserved praise of the Commander-in-Chief at Aldershot, prior to their leaving for Zululand, which they have retained ever since.'

The following district order, published by Colonel Bellairs, C.B., is fitting testimony to the heroism of Mrs. Smith, who has, I believe, since her return to England, received a well-deserved token of merit from the gracious hand of Her Majesty the Queen :—

'PRETORIA, *April* 5.

'The officer commanding desires to thank Mrs. Smith, widow of the bandmaster of the 94th, for the good services she rendered at Bronkhurst Spruit fight, in assisting the wounded. Mrs Smith was herself present in the midst of the action, but though surrounded by the dead and dying, she in a courageous way set about alleviating the sufferings of the wounded, and for upwards of three months has continued to be unremitting in attention upon them, under very trying circumstances. Such true heroism and devotion merit recognition and high praise. Colonel Bellairs therefore takes the opportunity of Mrs. Smith's returning to England, publicly to refer to the good acts she has performed.'

Dr. Crow has said sufficient in his remarks to indicate what the Boer fire was as regards precision at Bronkhurst Spruit,—*an average of five wounds per man.* One of the men I know received no less than seven distinct wounds. Sir Evelyn Wood says that at the charge of Balaclava he knows that a man received nineteen wounds and survived them, no less than the surgical treatment which followed. There is therefore nothing new under the sun nowadays; not even the survival of the soldier who at Bronkhurst Spruit was riddled with seven bullets.

The Boer rising had now begun in earnest; there was no longer any question of the coming contest being a desperate one. The alarm created in Pretoria by the news of the slaughter of the headquarters of the 94th may be imagined. The news which arrived previously of hostilities having actually commenced at Potchefstrom was discredited. There was no room for doubt as to the intentions of the Boers after the arrival of Conductor Egerton from the battlefield. The capital immediately was put in as good a state of defence as the authorities could devise, that is to say, the town was abandoned, martial law was proclaimed, and all the inhabitants went into what is called laager, *i.e.* temporary defence, and every man who could carry a rifle had to bear arms.

The bad feeling raised between the Boers and English inhabitants of the Transvaal, by what was called at the time 'the massacre of Bronkhurst Spruit,' was increased when the story of Captain Elliott's murder was told by Captain Lambart. Arriving in Pietermaritzburg, he made the following report to Sir George Colley, on the 5th of January :—

'Sir,—I have the honour to report, for the information of His Excellency, that as I was returning from the Orange Free State on December 18 (where I had been on duty buying horses to mount Commandant Ferreira's men for the Basuto war, and also remounts for my troop of Mounted Infantry and the Royal Artillery), when about thirty miles from Pretoria on the road from Heidelberg, I was suddenly taken prisoner by a party of twenty or thirty Boers, who galloped down on me (all around), and, capturing the horses, was taken back to Heidelberg. After being there some six or seven days, I was joined by Captain and Paymaster Elliott, 94th Regiment (the only officer not wounded in the attack on the detachment of the 94th Regiment), who arrived with some forty prisoners of war of the 94th Regiment. On the following day (the 24th of December) we received a written communication from the Secretary to the Republican Government, to the effect "that the members of the said Government would call on us at 3.30 that day," which they did. The purport of their interview being—"That at a meeting of Council they had decided to give us one of two alternatives : (1) To remain prisoners of war during hostilities in the Transvaal ; (2) To be released on *parole d'honneur*, that we would leave the Transvaal at once, cross into the Free State under escort, and not bear arms against the Republican Government during the war." Time being given us for deliberation, Captain Elliott and myself decided to accept No. 2 alternative, and communicated the same to the Secretary of the South African Republic, who informed us in the presence of the Commandant-General, P. Joubert, that we could leave next day, taking with us all our private property. The following days being respectively Christmas Day and Sunday, we were informed that we could not start till Monday, on which day, having signed our *parole d'honneur*, my horses were harnessed, and we were provided with a duplicate of our parole or free pass, signed by Commandant-General, and escort of two men to show us the road to the nearest drift over the Vaal River, distant twenty-five miles, and by which P. Joubert personally told us both we should cross, as there was a punt there. We started about 1 P.M. from the Boer camp, passing through the town of Heidelberg. After going about six to eight miles, I noticed we were not going the right road, and mentioned the fact to the escort, who said it was all right. Having been "look-out" officer in the Transvaal, I knew the district well. I was certain we were going wrong, but we had to obey orders. At nightfall we found ourselves nowhere near the river drift; and were ordered to outspan for the night, and next morning the escort told us they would look for the drift. Inspanning at daybreak, we again started, but after driving about for some hours across country, I told the escort we would stop where we were, while they went to search for the drift. Shortly after they returned, and said they had found it, and we must come, which we did, eventually arriving at the junction of two rivers (Vaal and Klip), where we found the River Vaal impassable; but a small punt capable of only holding two passengers at most, by which they said we must cross. I pointed out that it was impossible to get my carriage or horses over by it, and that it was not the punt the General said we were to cross. The escort replied it was Pretorius' Punt that the General told them to take us, and we must cross; that we must leave the carriage behind and swim the horses, which we refused to do, as we should then have had no means of getting on. I asked them to show me their written instructions, which they did (written in Dutch), and I pointed out that the name of Pretorius was not in it. I then told them they must either take us back to the Boer camp again or on to the proper drift. We turned back, and after going a few miles the escort disappeared. Not knowing where we were, I proposed to Captain Elliott we should go to the banks of the Vaal and follow the river till we came to the proper punt. After travelling all Monday, Tuesday, and up till Wednesday about 1 P.M. when we found ourselves four hours or twenty-five miles from Spencer's Punt, we were suddenly stopped by two armed Boers, who handed us an official letter, which was opened and found to be from the Secretary to the Republican Government, stating that the members were surprised that, as officers and gentlemen, we had broken our *parole d'honneur* and refused to leave the Transvaal; that if we did not do so immediately by the nearest drift which the bearers would show us, we must return as prisoners of war; that as through our ignorance of the language of the country there might be some misunderstanding, they were loth to think we had willingly broken our promise. We explained that we should reply to the letter, and request them to take it to their Government, and were prepared to go with them at once. They took us back to a farmhouse, where we were told to wait till they fetched their Commandant, who arrived about 6 P.M., and repeated to us the same that was complained in our letter of that day. We told him we were ready to explain matters, and requested him to take our answer back to camp. He then ordered us to start at once for the drift. I asked him, as it was then getting dark, if we could start early next morning, but he refused. So we started, he having said we should cross at Spencer's, being closest. As we left the farmhouse, I pointed out to him that we were going in the wrong direction, but he said, "Never mind, come on across a drift close at hand." When we got opposite it, he kept straight on; I called to him, and said that this was where we were to cross. His reply was, "Come on." I then said to Captain Elliott, "They intend taking us back to Pretorius," distant some forty miles. Suddenly the escort (which had all at once increased from two to eight men, which Captain Elliott pointed out to me, and I replied, "I suppose they are determined we shall not escape, which they need not be afraid of, as we are too keen to get over the border") wheeled sharp down to the river, stopped, and pointing to the banks, said, "There is the drift, cross." Being pitch dark, with vivid lightning, the river roaring past, and as I knew impassable, I asked, "Had we not better wait till morning, as I did not know the drift?" They replied, "No, cross at once." I drove my horses into the river, when they immediately fell; lifted them, and drove on about five or six yards, when we fell into a hole. Got them out with difficulty, and advanced another yard, when we got stuck against a rock. The current was now so strong, and drift deep, my cart was turned over on to its side, and water rushed over the seat. I called out to the Commandant on the bank that we were stuck, and to send assistance, or might we return, to which he replied, "If you do, we will shoot you." I then tried, but failed, to get the horses to move. Turning to Captain Elliott, who was sitting beside me, I said, "We must swim for it," and asked could he swim, to which he replied, "Yes." I said, "If you can't, I will stick to you, for I can." While we were holding this conversation, a volley from the bank, ten or fifteen yards off, was fired into us, the bullets passing through the tent of my cart, one of which must have mortally wounded poor Elliott, who only uttered the single word "Oh!" and fell headlong into the river from the carriage. I immediately sprang in after him, but was swept down the river under the current some yards. On gaining the surface of the water, I could see nothing of Elliott, but I called out his name twice, but received no reply. Immediately another volley was fired at me, making the water hiss around where the bullets struck. I now struck out for the opposite bank, which I reached with difficulty in about ten minutes; but as it was deep, black mud, on landing I stuck fast, but eventually reached the top of the bank, and ran for about 2000 yards under a heavy fire the whole while. The night being pitch dark, but lit up every minute by vivid flashes of lightning, showed the enemy my whereabouts. I found myself now in the Free State, but where I could not tell, but knew my direction was south, which, though it was raining, hailing, and blowing hard, and bitterly cold, an occasional glimpse of the stars showed me I was going right. I walked all that night and next day till one o'clock, when eventually I crawled into a store, kept by an Englishman called Mr. Groom, who did all in his power to help me. I had tasted no food since the previous morning at sunrise, and all the Dutch farmers refused me water, so without hat or coat (which I had left on banks of Vaal), and shoes worn through, I arrived exhausted at above gentleman's place, who kindly drove me to Heilbron, where I took the post-cart to Maritzburg. I fear that Captain Elliott must have been killed instantly, as he never spoke, neither did I see him again. I have to mention that both Captain Elliott and myself, on being told by South African Republican Government that the soldiers who had been taken prisoners were to be released on the same conditions as ourselves, expressed a wish to be allowed to keep charge of them, which was refused, but we were told that wagons, food, and money should be supplied to take them down country. But when they reached Spencer's Punt over the Vaal, were turned loose, without any of the above necessaries, to find their way down country. They met an English transport rider named Mr. F. Wheeler, who was going to Pietermaritzburg with his wagon, which had been looted by the Boers, and who kindly gave them transport, provided them with food, and is bringing them to the city, which, as I passed them at the Drakensburg on Tuesday, they should reach on Sunday next—consisting of one sergeant and sixty-one men, all that remain of the Leydenburg detachment and headquarters of the 94th Regiment.—I have the honour to remain, sir, your obedient servant,

'R. H. LAMBART,
Captain, Royal Scots Fusiliers.'

As soon as it was known at Cape Town that the Boers and Her Majesty's forces had come into contact, and blood had been shed, a deputation waited upon the Administrator there on the 25th December, which resulted in the following telegraphic messages passing between Cape Town and England:—

'Administrator Sir G. C. STRAHAN, K.C.M.G., to the Right Honourable the EARL OF KIMBERLEY.

(Received December 29, 1880.)

'*December* 25.—A deputation, composed of fifteen members of the Legislature and others, Mr. Merriman spokesman, request me to send the following resolution by telegraph: "That this deputation, in common with the rest of South Africa, deplores the unhappy state of affairs now existing across the Vaal River, and ventures to urge upon Her Majesty's Government, that in order to effect a settlement of the differences which have arisen, and to establish tranquillity, it is desirable that some person acquainted with the feelings and opinions of the inhabitants, and possessing the confidence of all parties in South Africa, should be appointed as a Special Commissioner to the Transvaal territory, to inquire into and report upon the exact position of affairs, the feelings and wishes of those interested, and what arrangements would be most advantageous to the country, and most likely to reconcile the inhabitants to the government of the Queen; and the deputation would further respectfully suggest that the Chief-Justice of the Cape Colony, Sir J. H. de Villiers, possesses in an eminent degree the qualifications required for such an office."

'I have sent copy of resolution to Governor of Natal, with my reply *in extenso*, which was to following effect: "Transvaal affairs not now under control of the Governor of the Cape. In forwarding their resolution, I must be considered as simply the means of conveying their wishes to Secretary of State, and that it was not for me to discuss, especially with no official information from the Transvaal, as to events there the advisability or otherwise of meeting their wishes as suggested." Explanations by despatch.

'Administrator, Cape Town.'

'The Right Honourable the EARL OF KIMBERLEY to Administrator Sir G. C. STRAHAN, K.C.M.G.

'*December* 30.—Inform deputation that whilst fully appreciating their motives, we do not think the present moment would be opportune for sending Special Commissioner to Transvaal.'

The year 1880 thus closed finding the Gladstone Government still in the same frame of mind as regards the Transvaal Boers. Though they had commenced armed resistance, and had proclaimed themselves an independent Republic, there was no need for any inquiry into their grievances; the blood-guiltiness theory had not presumably occurred to any one yet. At this time the state of the Transvaal was as follows:—Marabastudt, in the far north, garrisoned by one company of infantry, isolated. Leydenburg town defenceless; Leydenburg fort garrisoned by one company. Pretoria isolated; the city defenceless. Potchefstrom town in the hands of the enemy; the garrison in the fort isolated. Heidelberg and Middleburg and Utrecht in the undisputed possession of the Boers. Wakkerstroom and Standerton the only towns really in the hands of the English. Five or six miles of the northernmost part of Natal invaded and occupied by the enemy's forces.

When Sir Owen Lanyon began to appreciate his position,—and perhaps to reflect on what circumstances had contributed to it in no small degree,—he began to tear to pieces the several documents which the Boers had issued, and he did this by means of a long memorandum, dated January 1, 1881. It has been said that Sir Owen Lanyon was more of an adept at despatch-writing than at administrative work. That allegation must have been made before the memorandum I refer to saw the light. The introduction to it is as follows:—

'Memorandum by His Excellency the Administrator in Council.

'The second proclamation, dated 23d December 1880, issued by or on behalf of the so-called Triumvirate of the South African Republic, professedly restored by the so-called first proclamation of the 16th December 1880, is intended, by an ingenious distortion of some facts, a suppression of others, and statements which have no foundation in fact, to throw upon His Excellency the Administrator and the Government of this province the responsibility—

'(1) Of commencing a war without notice.

'(2) Of carrying it on contrary to the rules of civilised warfare; and this

'(3) More especially with regard to Potchefstrom and the action of the military stationed there.

'The following memorandum has therefore been adopted by His Excellency the Administrator in Executive Council.'

To illustrate the tenor of the document itself, I need only reproduce one or two paragraphs out of the half hundred composing it:—

'The proclaimers of the restoration of that Republic, which ceased to exist on the taking effect of the Act of Annexation, by which the territory of the Transvaal, or South African Republic, was in April 1877 attached to the dominion of the British Crown, appear to be alarmed at the result of their own acts, and to be ignorant that civil war was the only natural result of their own proclamation.

'In considering the two proclamations of the 16th and 23d December 1880, a comparison of dates is important. A mass meeting of the inhabitants of this province had been convened by the Boer Committee for the 8th January 1881, then to consider a letter addressed by the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone, immediately on his recent accession to power (*sic*), to Messrs. P. Kruger and P. J. Joubert, and to consider other matters connected with the so-called independence of the people.

'Early in November the emissaries of the Boer Committee throughout the province took steps to excite the people against the Government, to incite them to oppose the execution of the laws, to resist the process of the law courts of the province, and to refuse to pay the taxes imposed long since by the Volksraad, the legislature of the late Republic.

'The natural result of all this agitation was to induce resistance to the duly constituted authorities of the Government in more than one district of the province. And in some districts certain of the inhabitants agreed and conspired together, and signed, and thereafter published, their criminal agreements not to pay taxes.'

After giving the official version of the Bezhuidenot affair, His Excellency remarks: 'The men of Schoon Spruit, however, banded together, threatened the messenger and his assistants so specially appointed to execute the warrant, and prevented the arrest of the offenders. It ceased to be a mere matter of local police, and became one of more general open defiance of the law, when the local men appealed to and were encouraged by Mr. Paul Kruger and certain others designating themselves the Boer Committee, in their resistance of the law and the authority of the Government.'

The accuracy of the reference to Paul Kruger has yet to be established. For the rest, the memorandum is a history of the outbreak, with the terms rebels, wicked and designing agitators, introduced in every four or five lines; and the counter charges Sir Owen Lanyon makes against them include murder, robbery, incitement of natives to rebellion. The concluding paragraphs are worth reproducing without further comment, except this—that Sir Owen Lanyon, when he wrote them, was evidently in a great hurry to whitewash, for the eyes of the world, the Pretorian Government. If their case for the defence was a good and strong one, the statement of it might very well have been held over until they had been called on to plead in a regular way. If the Boers were as untruthful as Sir Owen Lanyon indicated, then surely it was somewhat beneath his dignity to enter the lists with them in an argumentative discussion. The memorandum closes with these words:—

'But rebels, though public enemies, are not entitled to all the privileges of belligerents, and even were they, then by the modern law of nations, no declaration or other formal notice to an enemy of the existence of war is (necessary?) to legalize hostilities.

'The disuse of these declarations, it has been remarked, does not grow out of an intention to take the enemy unawares, but out of the publicity and circulation of intelligence peculiar to modern times.

'The duty of a Government to put down rebellion arises from the relation of a Government to its subjects.

'It thus clearly appears that the civil war now being carried on in this province was not commenced by Her Majesty's Government and without notice, but that in every case the rebels have provoked and commenced the attack and fired the first shot.

'The rebels have, by their overt act, compelled the Government to take action to put down the rebellion. They have defied the law, endeavoured to dictate terms to the Government, and rendered necessary the adoption of coercive measures to ensure respect for the law; and they themselves, before a shot was fired, had drawn up and despatched to Potchefstrom, in order that the same might be printed, a proclamation declaring the whole country to be in a state of siege and under martial law, in consequence of the action already taken and then determined upon, not by the Government, but by themselves.

'The surrounding and gradual hemming in under a flag of truce of a force, and a selection of spots from which to direct their fire, as in the case of the unprovoked attack by the rebels on Colonel Anstruther's force, is a proceeding of which very few like incidents can be mentioned in the annals of civilised warfare.

'The barbarous atrocities said to have been committed at Potchefstrom are in no way proved, and in the absence of any statement of details, it is clear that the broad assertion cannot be refuted. When barbarous atrocities can be specified, they can be inquired into, but vague and unsupported charges need no refutation.

'It will thus be seen by the foregoing minute how ingeniously facts have been distorted and supported, and how statements unfounded in facts have had currency given them as being facts.

'It will be noted how the foreigners and other leaders, who have made the misguided people of this country the stepping-stone to their ambitious designs, have commenced their so-called Government by acts of wrong and deeds of violence, substituting licence for liberty, and have sought to justify and explain their proceedings by mis-statements, and an endeavour to fix the responsibility of their lawless acts upon Her Majesty's Government.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INVASION OF NATAL.

LEAVING the Transvaal for a time, my story will be confined now to events in Natal—to the war as carried on inside this colony. In their own country the Boers had so far got it nearly all their own way; to maintain their advantage, by preventing the entry of a relief force, they chose, with eminent discretion, the situation now famous as Laing's Nek.

Sir George Colley, seeing Newcastle threatened by the enemy, and the probability of one or more of our small garrisons in the Transvaal requiring relief at an early date, decided to proceed immediately with the force in Natal available to take the field. With the 3-60th Rifles, the 58th Regiment, a detachment of the 2-21st, a contingent of the Natal Brigade and Artillery, he mustered a force 1000 strong, which was despatched to Newcastle with all possible speed. That Sir George Colley, as a humane man, dreaded the result of the bad blood raised between the Boers and the British soldier by the affair of Bronkhurst Spruit, and wished to allay the ill-feeling consequent upon that disaster, is evinced by the following general order he caused to be published on the 28th December:—

'HEADQUARTERS, PIETERMARITZBURG, *December* 28, 1880.

'The Major-General commanding regrets to inform the troops of his command that a detachment of 250 men of the 94th Regiment, on its march from Leydenburg to Pretoria, was surprised and overwhelmed by the Boers—120 being killed and wounded, and the rest taken prisoners. The attack seems to have been made while the troops were crossing a spruit, and extended to guard a long convoy. The Major-General trusts to the courage, spirit, and discipline of the troops of his command, to enable him promptly to retrieve this misfortune, and to vindicate the authority of Her Majesty and the honour of the British arms. It is scarcely necessary to remind soldiers of the incalculable advantage which discipline, organization, and trained skill give them over more numerous but undisciplined forces. These advantages have been repeatedly proved, and have never failed to command success in the end against greater odds, and greater difficulties, than we are now called on to contend with. To all true soldiers the loss we have suffered will serve as an incentive and stimulus to greater exertions; and the Major-General knows well he can rely on the troops he has to command, to show that endurance and courage which are the proud inheritance of the British army. The stain cast on our arms must be quickly effaced, and rebellion must be put down; but the Major-General trusts that officers and men will not allow the soldierly spirit which prompts to gallant action to degenerate into a feeling of revenge. The task now forced on us by the unprovoked action of the Boers is a painful one under any circumstances; and the General calls on all ranks to assist him in his endeavours to mitigate the suffering it must entail. We must be careful to avoid punishing the innocent for the guilty, and must remember that, though misled and deluded, the Boers are in the main a brave and high-spirited people, and actuated by feelings that are entitled to our respect. In the operations now about to be undertaken, the General confidently trusts that the good behaviour of the men will give him as much cause of pride and satisfaction as their conduct and gallantry before the enemy, and that the result of their efforts will be a speedy and successful termination to the war.'

In Natal, where there is a large Dutch element, one which was thoroughly in sympathy, as a matter of course, with their brethren in the Transvaal, although with their sympathy they remained thoroughly loyal to the British Government, these words produced a good effect.

The one arm in which Sir George Colley's relief column (as it was called) was deficient was cavalry. The best was made of the men available or suitable for service as mounted infantry, but not more than sixty could be mustered, exclusive of the Natal Mounted Police, a standing force, raised for services similar to that rendered by the Royal Irish Constabulary. The High Commissioner determined to march by the nearest route to Pretoria, viz. through Natal to Newcastle, and thence by the main road to the capital of the Transvaal *viâ* Standerton. There was, in fact, no other route for him to take. The idea of taking his force to Delagoa Bay by sea, and marching from thence to Pretoria,—a suggestion made in England,—was absurd. In January that route is simply impassable; fever and swamp would have ensured the failure of any expedition sent by that path. The only alternative was to take the road *viâ* Cape Town and Murraysberg to the edge of the Karoo by rail, thence *viâ* Kimberley to Potchefstrom. That course was never contemplated as a desirable one; already the Cape Colony and the Free State were in a state of ferment about the war; it would have been as injudicious to have selected the Cape Colony for the line of march as it would have been to have attempted to use the Free State for the advance of the relief column to a spot bordering the Transvaal convenient for entry. There was nothing for it but to encounter the Boers in front at the spot in Natal on the Drakensberg they had chosen to occupy. Any one consulting the map of Natal will find that it is diamond-shaped; it was at the northernmost extremity of this that *the* struggle for supremacy was to take place.

In Newcastle much alarm was felt by the near approach of the Boer patrols. There was there a fort, and a couple of companies of infantry constituted the garrison, but the fort was in a defenceless state, and quite inadequate to shelter all the people living in the swamp below it, which is dignified by the name of Newcastle. The resident magistrate of the town took upon himself the duty of writing to the Boer leaders as 'the mouthpiece' of the High Commissioner; and in his letter, after pointing out that Natal was a neutral State, and had no hand in the war, requested the Boers to withdraw their armed force from Natal soil. The result of this legal luminary's attempt at diplomacy was, that his weak arguments were flouted, and his interference in the matter, as soon as Sir George Colley heard of it, brought him what was tantamount to a reprimand. Three days after sending his letter to the Boer leaders, Mr. Beaumont had, by instruction of Sir George Colley, to write to them again requesting them to consider his previous letter cancelled, he having 'no authority to describe himself as the mouthpiece of His Excellency.' Taking advantage of the silly argument of Mr. Beaumont, the Newcastle magistrate, that Natal was a neutral State, the Boers scored an easy point. Bok, the Staat's Secretary, immediately replied that whether neutral or not, Natal was allowing a passage to Her Majesty's troops, and was employing her locally-raised mounted police force to engage in duties which a neutral

State would not be justified in permitting. This was the way the Triumvirate argued the point in their despatch :—

'The point at issue here, whereupon we wish to have the verdict of an international jury, is this : Can it be called lawful warfare to bring forward the delicate point of neutrality of a third country, forcing by the raising of this point one of the belligerent parties to withdraw his advanced guards from a very desirable spot, and when this succeeds to tell the same party very quietly two days afterwards that it was all nonsense?

'In order to enable said party to give a true verdict upon this point, it is necessary to draw their attention to the fact, that the very same man is Governor of the country which he wishes to be respected as neutral, and at the same time head or chief of one of the belligerent parties. With due respect for the impartiality of the said jury, we contend that the mutual desire to mitigate the suffering which the ensuing war must necessarily entail, will be frustrated by such acts, showing an utter want of respect of the one belligerent party to the other.'

The Triumvirate, moreover, seemed to take offence at the very just and generous spirit in which Sir George Colley showed himself willing to treat their movement. Nothing apparently gave them more offence than the slightest imputation that they were rebels, misguided or deluded men. Mr. Bok claimed that the 'noble struggle' in which they were engaging could not be called rebellion, since hundreds of the Transvaalers who were engaged in that struggle never took the oath of allegiance to the Queen; the contention, as touching at least a large section of the belligerents, was a sound one. Amongst other protests issued by the Triumvirate against the insinuation that they were rebels, was the following, the conclusion of which fairly illustrates the strain of pious invocation which from first to last the Boers indulged in :—

'The *General Orders* of His Excellency Sir George Pomeroy Colley still speak of us as a *misled* and *deluded* people, continuing thereby that most untruthful of all misrepresentations, originated in Pretoria, and which may be called the main cause of all the miseries past and future. Perhaps, after all, we are misled and deluded. By what or by whom? By our faith in a living God, who will be the Defender of the weak against the strong, of the oppressed against the oppressor, who will raise a feeling of shame amongst the English people for the evil deeds which are perpetrated in their name in South Africa. In the name of our Lord we will fight until death.'

The idea of the affair at Bronkhurst Spruit being characterized as a massacre shocked them beyond measure, and they indignantly repudiated the idea that it was an unprovoked action; and as regards the Elliott murder, Sir George Colley having sent a copy of Captain Lambart's report of the matter to the Triumvirate, the following reply will best illustrate the feeling and intentions of the Triumvirate towards the murderers at this early stage of the war:—

'SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
HEIDELBERG, *January* 16, 1881.

'J. C. MACGREGOR, Esq., Capt. R.E.,
Assistant Military Secretary.

'SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 12th of January instant, and addressed to P. Joubert, Esq., Commandant-General, sent over to the Government by Mr. Joubert's order.

'I am directed by the Government to express their sincere thanks for the transmission of the statement made by Captain Lambart of the circumstances attending his release from the camp at Heidelberg, and the murder of Captain Elliott, 94th Regiment.

'I am ordered to express at once, and in the most emphatic way, the deep feelings of horror and disgust which the Government feel for an act so outrageous as is described by Captain Lambart.

'It was only two days before the arrival of your letter, and on the 14th January, that some vague rumours about this horrid act reached this place from the Free State, and at once the Government sent an express to Heilbron with instructions to inquire at the Landdrost's office into the matter, as is shown by the enclosed copy of a letter to the said Landdrost; so there can be no reasonable doubt that the real perpetrators of this foul act shall be punished according to law. I will further be only too glad to apprise you of the proceedings in this case, and do sincerely hope that Captain Lambart, for the sake of justice, will be ready at the first summons to that effect to come up and give his evidence.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

'J. V. EDWARD BOK, State Secretary.'

'SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
HEIDELBERG, *January* 14, 1881.

'M. STEYN, Esq., Landdrost,
Heilbron, O. F. State.

'SIR,—This very moment we learn from Messrs. Louis Botha and Willem Bester, inhabitants of the district of Harrismith, O. F. State, that they have heard that Captain Elliott, of the 94th Regiment, who was set at liberty by us, has been shot in the river (the Vaal) in the beginning of the night.

'The above-named gentlemen tell us that statements with regard to that affair have been made before you, and also that the affair has been investigated by you.

'Be so kind immediately to send copies of the given statements and of your held investigation.

'We can assure you that if the rumour might prove to be true, we look upon that act as public murder, and that we will not rest before the perpetrators have undergone their just punishment, always in the case the perpetrators are inhabitants of this State.—We are, Sir, your obedient servants,

'J. V. EDWARD BOK, State Secretary.'

From men who had managed to escape the vigilance of the Boer patrols in the neighbourhood of Laing's Nek and escaped into Natal, we obtained the information that just beyond the Nek, Joubert had pitched a standing camp at a place called Coldstream, which is, in fact, on the border line between Natal and the Transvaal. This locality also bears the name of 'Meek's' and 'Walker's,' from two Englishmen who occupy houses there. Meek was one of those whom the Boers cordially hated, and he on his part heartily despised them. When their advance scouts arrived at his farm, he had considerable difficulty in getting away across the border. Fortunately for him, only two Boers were his visitors. Nothing daunted by the odds against him, Meek knocked one down with his fist as soon as they informed him that they had come to arrest him, and treated the other in no less rough a manner. He certainly overawed them, because they beat a hasty retreat from the house. Later in the day, Meek received an intimation that the Boers were sending a guard to apprehend him, and he wisely withdrew to Newcastle, putting as many of his household goods as possible on his wagons. All that he actually saved, however, was the rifle he carried and the horse he rode, as he thought when he got to Laing's Nek that he need not bother to take his goods and chattels farther, as Sir George Colley would soon be there. He therefore left them at a neighbour's house, just under the rise leading to the Nek. There they became the spoils of the Boers a few days later. From what I gathered after the war from Mr. Walker, whom I have mentioned as living at Coldstream, and who remained on his farm unmolested by the enemy the whole of the time, the Boers in the middle of January encamped at Meek's, or close to Coldstream. The drift itself they were somewhat chary of crossing, as one of their number, lighting his pipe whilst sitting on a box of dynamite in Walker's store, was warned by the proprietor to be careful not to drop a match there. This was before the advance over the river to the Nek was made, and the Boers feared that there might be dynamite laid in the drift. After considerable peering into the depths, they finally crossed, without any casualties. While at Meek's, they made free with the telegraph poles, using them for *disselbooms* or firewood, of which there is little or none in the immediate neighbourhood. The wire they found very serviceable for making a kraal for their cattle near W. K. Johnston's farm. The movements of the enemy, so far as can be ascertained, were these:—On the first of January a party of about fifteen crossed the Coldstream for the Nek, but came back about ten at night. This probably would be the party which tried to cut off Major Poole and Mr. Birkett, who were busy sketching on the Nek about this time. It was not really till the 27th January—that is to say, the day before the first fight at the Nek—that the enemy occupied that famous position, although their scouts were passing to and fro constantly.

From the first it was an understood thing that the Nek would be the spot selected by the enemy for opposing the advance of the relief column, although Skheyns Hoogte and the Ingogo, parts of the country nearer Newcastle, offered advantageous posts for an enemy to hold. This supreme advantage, however, Laing's Nek offered, that of being approachable only from the front, the ravine in which is found the source of the Buffalo River on one side, and the Majuba and other precipitous mountains on the other, rendering a flank approach impossible, unless a very wide detour was made by Wakkerstroom, on the Orange Free State border. Between Laing's Nek and Newcastle the streams at the Ingogo and Skheyns

Hoogte would not in themselves offer serious impediments to the advance of troops, except at periods after heavy rain; then the 'drifts' or fords would be impassable. But the Boers had no artillery, and Sir George Colley had: the main object with the Dutch, therefore, was to find a spot which offered some natural shelter from artillery fire, and this they could not obtain if they took up any position within rifle range of the Skheyns Hoogte or Ingogo Drifts.

As some very erroneous ideas have been formed of Laing's Nek, I might here briefly describe it. 'Nek' is a term generally used in Natal and the Transvaal to describe the lowest point or a deflection in the ground between two hills. Laing's Nek is the lowest point in an unbroken ridge which connects the Majuba Mountain with hills running right up to the banks of the Buffalo River. A slight cutting, not more than four or five feet deep, forms the wagon road over this ridge; from the wagon road on either side the ground runs up somewhat abruptly, and is stony and irregular. How gentle is the rise to the Nek from the level ground in front of it towards Newcastle (and along which the approach is by the main road), may be judged from the fact that a horse can canter easily up the slope, or for the matter of that, over the two miles of ground which lead to the foot of the slope. From the top of the ridge to the level ground at the base is not more than 500 yards. The chain of hills in the centre of which is the Nek is semicircular, the horns of the crescent pointing towards Newcastle, and offering strong positions for any force intent on defending the only practicable approach to the Nek; but to occupy these flank positions a large body of men would be necessary, as the area from point to point is great. On the reverse or Coldstream side of the Nek the ground at the foot of the incline is broken and marshy, a regular drain for all the water running from the surrounding hills.

As late as the 8th of January, Colonel Deane, the Intelligence Officer for the time being at Newcastle, was informed that there were no Boers at the Nek, and even later than that, as I have already mentioned, Major Poole and Mr. Birkett went up to the Nek and were able to make some sketches of the spot before any Boers at Coldstream came to interfere with them. There was a mounted police patrol accompanying the sketching party, and when the Boers did approach they had to make their return at the double-quick to the Ingogo to prevent being cut off.

General Colley sent an ultimatum to the Boers on the 23d January, ordering them as insurgents to disperse, but not mentioning any time within which they had to do so. Joubert communicated this to the Government at Heidelberg, and the following reply was drawn up at Heidelberg, and sent away to General Joubert at Laing's Nek, dated January 29th. The distance between Newcastle and Heidelberg being 160 miles, and the roads impassable through rains, rapid travelling was impossible:—

'TO SIR GEORGE P. COLLEY.

'We beg to acknowledge receipt of yours of the 23d. In reply, we beg to state that, in terms of the letter, we are unable to comply with your request, as long as your Excellency addresses us as insurgents, and insinuates that we, the leaders, are wickedly misleading a lot of ignorant men. It is nearly hopeless for us to attempt to find the proper words for reply; but before the Lord we would not be justified if we did not avail ourselves of this, perhaps the last, opportunity of speaking to you as the representative of Her Majesty the Queen and people of England, for whom we feel deep respect. We must emphatically repeat, we are willing to comply with any wishes of the Imperial Government tending to the consolidation and confederation of South Africa; and in order to make this offer from our side as clear and unequivocal as possible,—although we have explained this point fully in all our documents, and especially in paragraphs 36 to 38 of our first proclamation,—we declare that we would be satisfied with a rescinding of the annexation and restoration of the South African Republic under a protectorate of Her Majesty the Queen, so that once a year the British flag shall be hoisted, all in strict accordance with the abovementioned clauses of our first proclamation. If your Excellency resolves to reject this, we have only to submit to our fate; but the Lord will provide.'

CHAPTER VII.

MARCH OF THE RELIEF COLUMN TO MOUNT PROSPECT.

BY the 24th January Sir George Colley was ready to start from Newcastle for the border. The town of Newcastle was first placed in a state of defence, an earthwork erected here and there, the Court House and other brick buildings strengthened, and a civilian guard drilled ready for any case of emergency, whilst at Fort Annel the military barracks, situated on a knoll overlooking the town, but across the stream, a contingent of the 3–60th Rifles were stationed under Major Ogilvie. From Newcastle the road to Laing's Nek runs up a steep hill, to the summit of which is fully three miles, and from there it trends down to the bottom of the mountain called the Skheyns Hoogte. This mountain is as steep as any that a road can be led up.

Starting on the 24th, the column did not make more than six miles. The train of wagons was necessarily a large one, and how cumbersome only those who have seen a span of eighteen oxen at work drawing a wagon at the rate of about two miles an hour on a level road can form an idea. When wet the roads here are as slippery as glass; roads they can hardly be called at any time, they are simply tracks when you once leave a town a mile off. When one track becomes so broken and dangerous that it is impossible to get a wagon along it, the traffic is carried on upon a new track parallel to the old one, until that in turn is worked into deep mud holes; and then another track is made, and so on till at times the 'road' will cover a hundred yards' width of ground, often more. The only places where there is any pretence of road-making or repairing are those spots where a cutting on a hillside is indispensable and confines the traffic to one narrow channel. When a mud hole is worked there big enough to bury a wagon up to the bed planks, small boulders are thrown in, and that is the way the Natal country roads are made and mended.

Simultaneously with Sir George Colley's advance from Newcastle, a force of Boers, who had been investing Wakkerstroom, advanced to the Nek, taking a line of march in fact parallel with the column. On the 25th the British column passed over the worst piece of road to be found between Newcastle and Pretoria, viz. the Skheyns Hoogte, without meeting with any opposition, and encamped on the high ground overlooking the Ingogo River, not much more than a rifle-shot distant from the spot where the engagement of February 8 took place. At daylight on the following morning the river was crossed, and the column proceeded towards Mount Prospect, again up a terrible hill—terrible because of its length and want of repair. From the river to Mount Prospect, a large plateau intersected by small ravines, is some five miles; and the site chosen for pitching the camp was some four miles from the Nek.

It was doubtless the intention of the General to have on this day gone straight at the Nek, but rain and thick mist coming on as soon as he gained the plateau, he decided to defer attacking till the following day. At Mount Prospect, therefore, a halt was made for the night, the wagons drawn up into a square in the centre of the camp, to form a rallying point or laager in the event of an attack. The heavy buck-wagon forms a capital barricade; and a laager of these vehicles has the advantage that it can be rapidly formed or broken up. The wagons are drawn close up in line, the spaces between the wheels, as well as that covered by the pole of one wagon projecting to the tail of the next, are filled up with ammunition boxes, commissariat store cases, or anything that comes handy.

Personally I was very unfortunate in arriving too late to witness the fight of the 28th January. Travelling on horseback from Pietermaritzburg, and leading a pack pony, it took me seven days to reach Newcastle. On the whole road there are only two of the rivers bridged; the tracks were in the worst condition that heavy rain and heavy traffic could make them. For three hours together there was not, during that week, fine weather; and if I say that for half the journey my nags were fetlock-deep in water or mud, I shall not exaggerate. To get off the beaten track was impossible; wagons had gone over 100 yards on the grass on either side, clear of the road, cutting up the ground in deep ruts; in these the water stood, and refused to soak in more than it had already done. On high ground or low, it was always the same—water standing everywhere; while every hollow or valley was a quagmire, which had to be threaded with caution. The only thing cheerful to be seen was the hotelkeeper; it was a pleasant time for him, with so much increased custom just received, and glorious prospects of custom to be renewed as the reinforcements plodded their way north. This war was a godsend to hotelkeepers, and they did not throw away the opportunity, unless I was favoured with the application of a special tariff both on the journey up and down. I do not wonder that Natal during the Zulu war was given a bad name by those who formed their opinion of the colonists as a body from an acquaintance with no larger a circle of colonists than the roadside canteen-keepers comprise. Of the nature of the accommodation for man no great complaint can be made, if you lose sight of the price you had to pay for it; the worst phase of their business is the stabling department. Oat hay ranging in price between 2s. and 2s. 6d. a bundle, four bundles of which would make a fair feed for a horse, is rather a high rate in a country which the guide-books tell you is positively the most fertile in the whole wide world. Oat hay without corn is poor stuff to offer to a horse on a long journey; at only two places had they any corn. At only two places on the road could you trust the boys to give your horses a mangerful; and to make sure that your own animals got it, and that half a dozen hungry, lean brutes, wandering about in the same stable loose, would not mince up every straw, you had to stand and keep guard. It fares ill with the horse of a man who travels in Natal who does not know what the Kaffir stable-boy is, and the indifference or something worse of his master, in nine cases out of ten, to the practices of his hirelings. A Kaffir, to save himself labour at the chaff-cutter, will, as soon as your back is turned, take the forage you have seen him give your horse out of the manger, and keep it for the next four or five comers. To save himself the trouble of climbing into the loft too often, even if the forage is put in the manger uncut, he will remove it as soon as you go in-doors, so that it will be handy to deceive the next *Umlungu* (or white man) with; and if you come back suddenly and catch him in the act, he will lie as only an Ethiopian can, and rely on his master to bear him out in case of blows. To ride late and early, wet through to the skin; to get an occasional upset in a mud hole, or to have to cut and let go everything from the pack-horse, to save the life of the animal when stuck in the ooze in the bed of a stream,—all these were minor trials compared to that of the vain endeavour to get food for the beasts of burden. What with swollen streams and bridgeless, punts unworkable, as at Lunday's River and the Ingogane, an incessant downpour of heavy or light rain, I thought I had done remarkably well when I reached Newcastle, with both nags sore-backed and knocked up, on the afternoon of the 28th January. To hear that the first engagement was taking place twenty-four miles off was annoying to some little degree.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BATTLE OF LAING'S NEK.

NEWCASTLE was in a state of no small excitement, in consequence of the rumours flying about, all of the wildest and most unreliable description. At Fort Annel they knew nothing, or pretended to know nothing, beyond the fact that the attack on the Nek had failed. In the evening several townspeople, who had gone up with the column to see the first fight, came back in various stages of excitement. They reported that the defeat was a severe one, that the camp was surrounded, and the Boers on the road to Newcastle. Anything but a reliable statement was to be heard that night, except the bald one that the repulse had been a serious one. Next morning Major Ogilvie informed me that, 'so far as he knew,' the road was still clear; so, in company with Captain Birkett and Lieutenant Boyd, who wanted to go the same road, I started for Mount Prospect camp, and arrived there comfortably enough but for the rain again, without seeing any sign of the Boers. Four hours after we had crossed the Ingogo, the stream had risen to such a height, that Boyd and Birkett, returning to Newcastle, had a narrow escape in recrossing. In Natal a couple of hours is sufficient in the summer-time to convert a rill into a torrent.

In the lines of the 58th Regiment and mounted squadron there was not a tent from which there were not absentees that day; every one was regretting the loss of a comrade-in-arms. The dull wet weather helped to cast a gloom around the camp, which nothing could shake off but the lapse of time, and a shifting of the British flag to the top of that ridge in front, which yesterday the brave fellows had in vain struggled to reach.

The position Sir George Colley had chosen for his camp was a strong one naturally. Situated to the right of the road, some 1000 yards distant, the ground there was open, and offered no shelter for the approach of an enemy. The Gatlings and artillery would sweep a host away that attempted an advance from that side. Immediately in front of the staff lines, the ground sloped down abruptly to a stream running into the Buffalo. On the right was a hillock, where a detached fort had been established, and beyond that the ground sloped down to the Buffalo River, that stream in itself forming a good defensive line at this time of the year, owing to the depth of the water in it, and the general precipitous nature of its banks. In the rear of the camp the ground was broken and difficult, and offered good natural cover for defensive purposes. Here again the slope was a steep one, and at the foot of the slope watercourses, *dongas* (ravines), and other impediments to an approach were plentiful. Any attempt to travel round about the camp at Mount Prospect by a person who was not familiar with every inch of the ground would end in failure, so completely is every 1000 yards of area intersected by spruits, bog-holes, etc. Between the camp and Laing's Nek the same remark applies. There was only one tolerable road, and that covered by the 9-pounders. However gloomy might be the thoughts of those in camp on the 29th, there prevailed an absolute sense of security. For the Boers to have attempted to storm the place would have pleased everybody there. The actual force that started from Newcastle comprised 500 of the 58th Regiment, 400 60th Rifles, 70 Mounted Squadron, 120 Naval Brigade, 100 detachment of 21st Regiment, 110 Artillery, and 60 or 80 of the Natal Mounted Police, besides a due complement of Army Service Corps, etc. Eleven hundred effectives were all that could be mustered on the evening after the first battle.

The details of the fight formed the only topic for conversation. They may be told as follows :—

At six o'clock on the morning of the 28th instant, the order for advance was sounded. The Mounted Squadron, composed of 70 men, and also the 60th Rifles, led up to the flat which lies between the camp and the Nek. They were followed by the Naval Brigade, with three rocket tubes, the 58th, and the Artillery, with two 7-pounders and four 9-pounders. The Mounted Police brought up the rear with ambulances. The flat was reached without the enemy making any demonstration. The rocket tubes then took up position on the left front, nearly facing the high road which runs through the Nek. To the right two 9-pounders and two 7-pounders unlimbered, and on the extreme right two 9-pounders. I should say that one company of the Rifles, the detachment of the 21st, and the Gatlings were left in camp. At 9.55 A.M. the guns began shelling the Nek. By this time the Boers had been seen on the top of the Nek, but no shot had been fired by them.

Just below their position, in the direct front, and standing by the side of the road, is the farmhouse of Henry Laing, with stone kraals or enclosures for cattle, and gardens around. Behind these walls a party of Boers took shelter, but the main body kept on the heights above, lying on the side of the ridge farthest from Mount Prospect, and therefore in comparative safety from shells. These striking the ridge would ricochet harmlessly over the heads of the men lying on the reverse side. The Boers distributed about Laing's kraals found they were in an uncomfortable position as soon as the Naval Brigade opened on them with their rocket tubes, and they were driven helter-skelter out of that place in a very short space of time. The position occupied by the Boers nearest to our force was the hills trending forward in a semicircle from the Nek towards the Buffalo on our right, and it was in storming the heights here that our loss was so severe. It was an attempt to take the enemy in flank, but without a suspicion that they had such a strong force concealed amongst the boulders lining the tops of the hills.

After the Nek had been shelled for about twenty minutes, and just at the moment when the Boers confess that occasional shells bursting in their lines were beginning to demoralize the defenders, —Joubert himself narrowly escaped being hit by a splinter,—the order was given in our lines to cease firing, and the Mounted Squadron advanced to take a hillock forming the most advanced spur of the Boer left flank position. The 58th prepared to charge a hill in the same direction, but lying nearer the Nek, or more in the hollow of the semicircle. To reach the base of either of these hills, the men had to cross some ground broken by watercourses. How the one charge and the other failed can be easily understood by any one who knows what the rise in the ground is. To climb up in dry weather is heavy work; to attempt it with a rush when the slopes were slippery would be to exhaust men and horses before they could compass half the distance. Colonel Deane, Major Essex, Major Poole, Lieutenant Elwes, and Lieutenant Inman, of the staff, led in front of the 58th; Major Brownlow and Captain

Hornby (detailed from the 58th) commanded the mounted infantry, or Mounted Squadron, as they were termed.

When the leading companies of the 58th had got about half-way up the rise, the first troop of the Mounted Squadron, led by Major Brownlow and Sergeant-Major Lunnie, charged the koppie, going to the right of the lines taken by the 58th. The moment the troop had gained a level which exposed them to the view of the Boers on the summit of the hill, a terrible volley emptied half the saddles. Horses went galloping here and there. Those who remained mounted were staggered by this first reception, but manfully re-formed, still under fire, and charged again. The hail of lead they were again met with was one that the weak force could not stand; but as an instance of the valour shown by the troop, I need only relate that Sergeant-Major Lunnie, of the King's Dragoon Guards, actually got into the trenches of the Boers. There the poor fellow was immediately shot dead, half a dozen rifles being turned on him.

Had there been a reserve troop to back up the effort of the first charge of mounted men, the Boers admit that they might have been forced to retreat from that position. The survivors of the Mounted Squadron say that their horses were completely blown before they got half-way up the rise; and I can quite believe it, from an inspection of the ground. Seventeen men killed and wounded, and thirty-two horses killed, wounded, or missing, was the only result of this attempt to storm the extreme left of the position held by the enemy.

The failure of the attack made by the Mounted Squadron placed the 58th on a worse footing than they were before, because by the time the mounted men were repulsed, the foot regiment had but just gained sight of the foe in front of them; and the retirement of Major Brownlow's force left the Boers at that point free to turn their attention to the right flank of the 58th. If the Mounted Squadron had a hard climb, the linesmen had a far heavier task, as the incline in front of them was steeper and longer than that on their right.

Colonel Deane, anxious to be first in the charge, rather hurried the men to the attack. He unfortunately did not give the order to deploy to the right and left before the ascent was commenced, and when the ridge close to the summit was reached, and the Boers for the first time could mark the storming party, and opened a heavy fire, the 58th were so crowded together that their loss was heavy, especially amongst the front companies. Volley after volley was delivered into their ranks before the order to deploy could be carried out; and an enfilading fire, opened by the Boers on their right flank, from the koppie which the Mounted Squadron had to retreat from, did not improve matters. It should be understood that the enemy, holding the crest of the hill which the 58th attacked, did not come out from some cover they had thrown up on the extreme summit, and fire on the foot soldiers as they clambered up to a ledge or shelf which hid the Boer position from their view; the Boers in confidence kept behind their sheltered trenches, and with a clear, open plateau in front of them, and the ledge in question, depended on the accuracy of their rifles to pick off every soldier who showed his head above that ledge. Doubtless the Boer tactics were wise ones. Had they come out from their cover to meet the scaling force, they would have exposed themselves to the fire of the guns down on the plain below. When the 58th came to closer quarters with them, it would be impossible for the artillery to practise on the defenders of the position without injuring the assailants.

After an exchange of fire for about five minutes, whilst our men were deploying on the ridge or ledge, Colonel Deane, who was mounted, saw that the Boers were more than a match for us with the rifle, and determined to try the bayonet. He called for a charge, but as the steel glistened from the scabbard, his horse was shot under him, and he fell to the ground. Springing to his feet, he reassured his men by calling out, 'I am all right.' The words were hardly out of his lips before he fell again, this time mortally wounded, as he rushed on foot towards the enemy far in advance of the foremost man of the regiment. The command then devolved on Major Hingeston, who with the other officers exposed themselves freely and fearlessly, encouraging the men for the desperate work before them. Major Hingeston, before a couple of minutes elapsed, was laid low by a bullet, a wound which proved fatal. The Boers still kept well within their entrenchments; our men were lying on the ground taking a shot whenever an opponent was seen. When the 58th uprose to charge, the fire poured into them is described by every one who came back alive as something terrible. Remember that they were at this time within thirty or forty yards of the enemy. Major Poole and Lieutenant Dolphin were amongst the next victims on our side; Captain Lovegrove and Lieutenants

Baillie and O'Donel received severe wounds; whilst the casualties amongst the non-commissioned officers were terribly heavy. The officers emptied their revolvers at the enemy, and did their mightiest to maintain their ground, even when it was apparent that a charge could not be sustained. Cut up as the regiment was, they could only fall back, and this was done in good order, although the Boers, now sure of victory and warmed to the work, came boldly out from their cover, and poured volleys into the retiring men. Had not the guns on the flat at the base of the hill now opened a fast and furious fire on the victors, it is probable that the 58th would have been all but annihilated. The artillery practice is described as being splendid by those who, retreating down the hill, could best judge of its effects. There was very little margin between our soldiers and the jubilant Boers,—so small a margin that one or two of the shells killed some of our men,—otherwise the artillerymen had the range to a nicety. The retreat was orderly; one company re-forming on the way down, faced about, and kept the enemy in check. Arrived at the foot of the hill, the survivors re-formed, and refilled their pouches with ammunition (their supply having been completely exhausted on the hill-top), perfectly ready to return to the charge if ordered. It was during the retreat that Lieutenant Baillie, who carried the regimental colours, was mortally wounded. Peel, who was bearing the Queen's colours, turned to assist him. 'Never mind me; save the colours,' was Baillie's reply. Peel was forced to comply, and taking the standard from the hand of his dying comrade, he was bearing them away when he fell into an ant-bear hole. Sergeant Bridgstock, who was close by, thinking he had been shot, seized the flags, and carried them some distance, till Peel came up to regain them.

Those who survived the fire say, and say it without the slightest doubt in their minds, that in the Boer lines they saw coloured men armed and fighting, whether Kaffirs or Hottentots of course they cannot tell—whether under compulsion or by election is equally an open matter; still the fact remains, and cannot be disputed.

The only commissioned officers with the regiment who came out of it were—Captain Lovegrove (wounded), Lieutenants Jobb, Boulton, Hon. Monck (acting adjutant), O'Donel (wounded), Fawcett, Morgan, Hill, Peel, Lucy, and Quartermaster Wallace. Out of the five staff officers who were there, only one, Major Essex, came out alive. He must bear a charmed life, being one of the few survivors of Isandhlwana and the engagement at the Ingogo Heights.

Amongst other individual acts of bravery during the retreat was one by Lieutenant Hill, who earned the Victoria Cross twice over on this occasion, but has not been offered it yet. Whilst the Boers kept up a terrible fusillade on the retreating companies, Hill, seeing a private fall wounded near him, went out of his way to the man, took him up, and carried him to a place of safety at the foot of the hill; returning up the hill, he, from under fire, claimed another poor fellow from the hands of death by carrying him from the scene of action. Had Colonel Deane survived this engagement, Lieutenant Hill probably would have received the most coveted decoration of a soldier, and one that he was entitled to. As quiet and unassuming as he is brave, this young officer never mentioned the circumstance to any one; fortunately, some of his brother officers witnessed the affair, and were proud to be able to relate it. What went the round of the regiment as an authentic incident of the fight for some time, but which afterwards was proved to be a soldier's yarn, was the following: 'Private Brennan of the 58th was the only man who bayoneted a Boer. Brennan saw lying on the ground a wounded soldier, at whom a Boer at a short distance was shooting, though the wounded man sang out for mercy. After killing the wounded man, the Boer turned his rifle on Brennan and shot at him. Brennan jumped to his feet; and so close to him was the Boer, that Brennan bayoneted his enemy before he could re-load, and returned to camp with the bayonet still covered with gore.'

This story was drawn from Brennan's imagination entirely. He brought back a bayonet covered with gore, it is true, but it was the gore of a dead horse, as Brennan afterwards confessed. Close though the combatants were during the engagement, the bayonet was never used; in fact, during the whole of the war, except at a sortie made from the fort at Potchefstrom by our side, the bayonet never once drew blood.

The 58th in their retreat were covered, after gaining the foot of the hill, by the 3-60th Rifles. Arrived at the guns where the General stood, the whole force fell back towards the standing camp, about seventy-three killed and one hundred wounded being the casualties amongst the 58th. The Boers now filed over the Nek, and made demonstrations as though they would follow up their success by attacking the camp; but this idea, if entertained then, was abandoned, and the retreat to camp, covered by the Mounted Police, was achieved without further loss on our side.

A flag of truce subsequently was sent forward to the enemy, and both parties engaged in the work of burying the dead and removing the wounded. The offer of a surgeon to attend the Boer wounded was refused by them. How short they were of medical necessaries may be judged from the fact that Dr. Merenski and Mr. Scholtz, two German missionaries who tendered their aid to the wounded Boers, had not even lint or carbolic acid to apply to the festering shattered limbs of the poor fellows, who were conveyed to the rear of the Nek to Meek's house at Coldstream. The bodies of Colonel Deane, Lieutenant Dolphin, Majors Poole and Hingeston and other officers, were found by our burying party well in front of the men they led. The Boers had stripped all the bodies of our dead of their boots, leggings, and accoutrements, necessaries that the enemy were in need of, but none of the other clothing was taken. Our burying party noticed the bodies of several Dutchmen prepared for interment entirely stripped; but their dead they took away in wagons. In four large graves were laid the bodies of our poor fellows; their graves mark the several spots where (1st) the Mounted Infantry were brought to a stand-still; (2d) the ledge or ridge which the 58th gained, and got face to face with the foe; (3d) the spot they afterwards reached, about thirty yards from the enemy's shelter; (4th) the line of retreat where the casualties were the heaviest. It appears, according to the account of those of our men who met Boers on the field after the conflict, that there were two classes in the enemy's ranks—one party of Boers were insolent, the other showed a very different spirit, deploring the loss of life, but saying they must defend their country. Similar evidence was furnished after every encounter our troops had with the Dutch. It was the young men—some mere boys of fifteen—who displayed, with pardonable ignorance, bragging insolence. The men of maturer years, with very few exceptions, behaved like men, and in the hour of victory in many instances restrained the braggarts from committing cowardly acts.

In this fight at the Nek, Private Venables of the 58th, who was one of the prisoners taken by the Boers, owed his life to the Boer Commandant, De Klerck, who intervened at a moment when several Boers had their guns pointed at the wounded soldier. Sergeant

Madden, of the Mounted Squadron, as well as Venables, bore testimony to the kind treatment received at the hands of the Boers after he was taken prisoner. This man says that the courageous Sergeant-Major of the troop (Lunnie) shot one Boer dead and wounded another with his revolver after he charged into the enemy's trench and before he received his death-wound.

The result of this day's work upon the intentions of Sir George Colley may be gathered from the following brief, manly speech, characteristic of the General, addressed to the camp on the evening after the fight:—

> 'OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS, AND MEN,—I have called you together this evening, being desirous of saying a few words to you. I wish every one present to understand that the entire blame of to-day's repulse rests entirely upon me, and not on any of you. I congratulate the 58th Regiment for the brave and noble manner in which they fought to-day. We have lost many gallant men, and amongst them was my intimate friend, Colonel Deane (emotion). I might say, however, that notwithstanding the loss of many troops to-day, we have not lost one atom of the prestige of England. It is my duty to congratulate Major Brownlow on the gallant charge he made this day. Owing to the loss we have suffered, I am compelled to await the arrival of reinforcements, but we certainly shall take possession of that hill eventually, and I sincerely hope that all those men who have so nobly done their duty to-day will be with me then. Good night.'

These words were afterwards adversely criticized, but Sir George Colley told the simple truth, whether it was undesirable to confess the truth or not. A direct attack on the front of the enemy's position would have been far more likely to succeed than this attempted flank movement, which never reached the enemy's flank. In the one case the line of attack would have been a comparatively easy one; the stone kraals adjoining Laing's farm would, when once the enemy was driven out by the artillery, have afforded splendid shelter —a *point d'appui*, if necessary, for an infantry regiment against the rifles of the Boers. With that post once occupied, the artillery directed on the ridge above, the scale would in all probability have been turned in our favour. For a cavalry charge or an infantry charge the Nek itself offered a far less difficult point to reach than the almost precipitous hills which infantry and cavalry were hurled against. Whether this opinion is an erroneous one or not, it must be allowed that the loss on our side could not well have been greater than it was on the 28th January, considering the number of men who actually came into action. That mistake was not the only one of the day; the fire of the artillery was not maintained long enough—that the Boers admit with satisfaction; the third mistake was not Sir George Colley's but that of the officer leading the 58th, driving them up the hill in columns of companies. To deploy men when under a severe fire at close quarters cannot be urged as more desirable than extending them when every one is cool and collected out of fire, readier to hear, receive, and carry out movements than when life depends on the handling of the rifle. The lion-hearted Colonel, who was first in the charge, and conspicuous in his bravery, has paid the penalty of the fault, if it was one; the sacrifice of so many other brave men being involved in that fault must be a sufficient apology for any hostile comment. One other point is worthy of attention. Is it, or is it not, desirable for the staff to lead in an affair of this sort? or is it more particularly the province of the officers belonging to a regiment to lead their own men into action? Sir George Colley and every member of his original staff, save one, Major Essex, perished in the Boer war in the course of two engagements. During that war not once, but at least twenty times, I have heard the point discussed, and hardly without exception the conclusion expressed amongst regimental officers, that it is a mistake to employ the staff for the duties of leaders of regiments or companies. It is a disagreeable work this criticizing the dead. I will close the account of the battle of Laing's Nek by reproducing the General Order published by Sir George Colley after the fight:—

'GENERAL ORDER.

'ARMY HEADQUARTERS, 29*th January* 1881.

'The Major-General commanding desires to thank the officers and men of the Natal Field Force, and especially of the 1-58th Regiment and of the Mounted Squadron, for their gallant conduct in the engagement of yesterday. The Major-General thought it his duty to make an effort for the relief of the Transvaal garrisons, notwithstanding the smallness of the force at his disposal and the strength of the enemy's position. That effort has been unsuccessful, but its failure reflects no discredit on the brave men who fought so nobly; and the fight made by the 58th on the hillside will always be remembered with pride by those who took part in or witnessed it. The Major-General has to deplore the loss of many valuable lives, especially that of Colonel Deane, whose body was found on the hillside ten yards in advance of the foremost man of that force which he was so proud to command; of Major Poole, R.A., Lieutenant Elwes, D.G., and Lieutenant Inman, 3-60th Rifles, who were killed nobly supporting their leader in his heroic charge; of Major Hingeston, commanding 58th Regiment, and Lieutenant Dolphin, who fell while leading and encouraging their men in their devoted efforts to carry the hill; and of Troop Sergeant-Major Lunnie, K.D.G., whose gallant death as he rode over the ridge into the midst of the enemy was witnessed by the whole force. With the small force at his disposal, further weakened by the losses of yesterday, the Major-General cannot renew the attack until the arrival of reinforcements; but the advance will not be long delayed, and the Major-General looks forward with assured confidence to the day when the Natal Field Force will retrieve its check of yesterday and march into Pretoria at the head of the relieving force.—By order,

'J. C. MacGregor, Captain R.E., for D.A.A.G.'

Her Majesty the Queen, on learning the issue of the battle, with a feeling of genuine sympathy for and appreciation of the efforts of her soldiers to uphold the honour of the empire, commanded the issue of this message: 'I am deeply grieved at the loss of so many of my brave officers and men. Major Poole is a great loss. Pray convey to Sir G. Colley the expression of my deep sorrow and anxiety for the wounded, as well as confidence.'

Joubert's version of this first engagement at the Nek was given in the following words:—

'To Mr. S. P. J. Kruger, Vice-President.

'Headquarters, *January* 28.

'Sir,—As I mentioned in my last, I expected an attack at any moment, and so it occurred. This morning, about seven o'clock, we were attacked in our position, and after about thirty shells had been fired over our men, the mounted (blue jackets) received orders to storm. They came so close that the powder burned each other. Though their loss was not great, they had to retreat; but then the infantry (red coats) stormed, and came so near that the dead on both sides fell in amongst each other. One of the the officers even fired in amongst our men with his revolver before he was shot, but then the Lord helped us. There being so few men in the field, the reinforcements I sent hither arrived just in time to assist, so that they also had to retreat. We had a very severe fight. The opportunity for the English cannon was too great, and we suffered heavily. Twenty-four of our best men were disabled. On the side of the enemy there lay ninety-five dead and wounded, and many had already been carried off before we reached there. Those who had been removed were all wounded. I believe that nearly 200 have been disabled. The cannon ceased fire, and somebody came with a flag of truce, bringing me the following note, written in pencil :—

'"To Commandant-General P. J. JOUBERT.

'"SIR,—You will do me a great service if you will allow me to send doctors to look after the wounded, who are dying in front of your position, and men to bury the dead.—I have, etc.,

'"G. POMEROY COLLEY."

'I hereupon replied :—

'"YOUR EXCELLENCY,—For the sake of humanity, I agree to your request, and at the termination of the battle I shall deliver up the dead.

'"P. J. JOUBERT, Commandant-General."

'In the meantime a second flag of truce arrived, with a doctor, whom I allowed to go in with two men to look after the wounded. I then saw a large number of men approaching. I told them they must go back until the conclusion of the battle, or I would fire upon them. The troops then withdrew with the cannon, which had not come within our range. Perceiving this, I allowed 150 unarmed men to come and fetch their dead and wounded, naturally after taking possession of their guns and ammunition. We had to see the enemy withdraw, as it would have cost the life of many of our bravest men had we attacked (attempted?) to do more, as the locality was so entirely in favour of the English that we would have been in the very mouth of their cannon. A son of our worthy friend Dirk Uys is also amongst the number of those mortally wounded. In haste,

'P. J. JOUBERT.

'To P. A. Cronje, Assistant Commandant-General.

'Meek's Farm, *Friday, January* 28, 1881.

'I have the honour to inform you that the enemy made an attack upon us. With the help of God, they have been repulsed with heavy losses. Our men were posted to keep the high ground, so that the enemy could not fire with cannon on the Nek. The enemy stormed one of the kopjes with about 1000 infantry and about 200 cavalry. Heavy cannon firing was kept up on our men, so that they could not come out, and had to wait until the enemy was on the heights; but once commenced, they were soon mixed up with the enemy, who were beaten back with the loss of between ninety and one hundred killed and a number wounded. On our side there were only between seventy and eighty on the heights. Thus they have been prevented to do more at this moment. Looking up to God that He may further bless us,—Yours,

'P. J. Joubert, Commandant-General.'

CHAPTER IX.

PRESIDENT BRAND THE MEDIATOR—CAMP LIFE.

BEFORE a shot had been fired in Natal, his Honour President Brand of the Free State used his utmost endeavour to prevent bloodshed. There were two reasons why he should strain every nerve in this direction. One reason, and the chief one, was that his generous heart prompted him to act as mediator; and the second reason was, that he probably foresaw grievous trouble for the Free State by becoming embroiled in the quarrel, should the war be carried to the bitter end. As early as the middle of January, he communicated with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the High Commissioner at the Cape, and also with Sir George Colley. The reply he received from Cape Town was to the following effect:—

'CAPE TOWN, *January* 27.

'With reference to your telegram to the Secretary of State, inquiring "if it would not be possible to offer to the Transvaal people through me certain terms and conditions, provided they ceased armed opposition," I am directed to inform your honour that if armed opposition ceases forthwith, Her Majesty's Government will thereupon endeavour to frame such a scheme as they believe would satisfy all enlightened friends of the Transvaal country.'

Any man with less perseverance than President Brand would have given up all idea of mediation after the fight at Laing's Nek; but to Mr. Brand it was only an additional incentive to increased exertion. His successive efforts I will allude to as they come under notice at various dates during the hostilities.

As early as the 26th January, the first batch of reinforcements, consisting of 2-60th Rifles (722 men), the 15th King's Hussars, and Major Pemberton's 3d Field Battery R.A., landed at Durban, whilst the 60th, 83d, 85th, and 92d Regiments were reported as coming shortly from the same direction. From the Highlanders (92d) who had just completed, with high honours, a prominent part in the Afghan campaign, great things were expected. Every one fancied the Highlanders, and made much of them.

On the 1st February our Camp at Mount Prospect was shifted slightly, some 500 yards only, on hygienic grounds. All that remained of the Mounted Squadron were first told off to scour the ground to our front, and to patrol there as a precautionary measure. As they rode well away towards the Nek, our tents were struck. As if by magic, the line on the horizon, on which seldom, if ever, a man was seen, swarmed with Boers. Evidently they anticipated either an attack or a retreat on our side was about to commence. With glasses we could plainly see the enemy filing down towards the positions they had held so successfully on the 28th of January. It was not long before they were undeceived as to our intentions; when the tents were pitched again, the Boers withdrew from the sky-line, and all was quiet there once more. The same day a Boer youth, carrying a flag of truce, came in with a message from Joubert asking for medicines. It happened, in the condition we were in then, with the field hospital full of wounded men, and the probability always present of our line of communications being cut, that it was necessary to husband supplies. Sir George Colley therefore replied that he could not accede to the request, but said that our surgeons should attend to and care for any wounded Boers that Joubert liked to send in equally with our own wounded. This same day all our empty wagons were sent back to Newcastle, together with many of the surplus oxen and cattle in the camp. The fact of our having so few mounted men for patrolling and scouting, cattle-guarding, etc., made the duty of looking after the large herd a serious one; besides this, the grass in the area covered by our guns was not too plentiful, considering the great number of cattle to depasture it. Since the engagement at Laing's Nek, the dimensions of the camp had been somewhat narrowed; the line of vedettes was materially contracted, and for the better security of the camp against a night attack, redoubts were built at each angle of the camp.

When the camp was shifted, the 58th Regiment was placed in the post of honour to the right of the staff lines. After witnessing that charge at the Nek, Sir George Colley, on more than one occasion, showed how great his confidence was in the regiment.

By the third of February, we were able to get some of our wounded away for the base hospital at Newcastle. Surgeon-Major Babbington had at this time only four or five assistants, and it can easily be imagined that the work of the medical staff was severe. The probability of a night attack being made on the camp by the Boers whilst our force was weakened by its recent losses, was known to many a sufferer in the Red Cross lines, and that knowledge kept them in a continual state of excitement, very prejudicial to their condition. As an illustration of what a man may suffer, grin and bear, and recover from, I might mention an incident which was repeated every day for over two months. One poor fellow who was wounded at Laing's Nek had also his shoulder shattered. Whenever the surgeon went to dress the wound, his conversation began somewhat in this strain: 'O doctor, are you going to git at me again?' As soon as the attendants touched him to place him in position, he would begin to cry out. The removal of his bandages made him shriek again at the top of his voice: 'O you murdering blackguards! oh, oh, oh! Doctor, for the love of God, leave me alone! Don't touch me! oh, oh, oh!' and the whole camp resounded with his yells. Often his tone was one of severe condemnation, in unmeasured terms, of doctors, attendants, and everybody around, in language more forcible than polite, and every possible epithet was launched at the heads of his persecutors. These failing in the desired effect, the 'patient' would become jocose, and twit the doctors on their want of skill, ask them, 'Will you kindly leave this tent?' with remarks that forced a laugh from any one within hearing. Then the poor fellow would writhe and struggle, and howl again with the strength of a maniac. I heard this the first day I came into camp; I heard it twenty times afterwards; and his unearthly cries and alternate laughter and witticisms, wrung from him in pain, greeted my ears the moment I was leaving for Pretoria after the peace had been signed. That was fully two months after the wound had been inflicted. If screams are any indication of the amount of physical pain a man suffers, that private must have suffered the agony of hell upon earth; but when last I heard of him, on returning down country, he was well enough to be removed, in fact had been sent home, maimed for life, but out of any danger. His cries of anguish daily unnerved the strongest; what must their effect have been on the patients around in a low nervous state?

One circumstance which militated against the removal of the wounded to Newcastle was the dangerous state of the road between the camp and the Ingogo River. All the way down the long hill were water-washes, boulders, and mud holes alternately, which made the passage of any vehicle a matter of no little peril. On one occasion an ambulance was upset there, but fortunately without injuring any of the patients inside. Later, when bearers were not so scarce, the wounded were carried on stretchers over the worst parts of the road, but in the earlier days this could not be attempted.

On the night of the 6th February, the camp was turned out by an alarm. It was one that proved afterwards to have come from the staff lines to test the discipline of the force. Every morning at four o'clock the rouse sounded, and the men stood under arms till daybreak, and this was the most trying part of the duties that fell to the lot of the column for a week or more after the 28th January, because it invariably was cold, raw, and misty, if there was not at the time a heavy downpour of rain.

The pervading impression in the camp now may, I think, be fairly expressed by an extract from a letter written on February 6 :—

'It is rumoured in camp that as soon as we are reinforced by two infantry regiments, one of cavalry, and one battery of artillery, another attempt will be made to take the Nek. With these reinforcements and the troops now in camp,—there are not more than 1000 effectives at this moment,—the general opinion is that the Nek will be taken. Knowing the ground now thoroughly, the mistakes of the 28th ultimo will not be repeated; in all probability, other mistakes will not be made.

'His Excellency Sir George Colley, you may feel certain, will do nothing to risk another repulse. It was not his fault so much as that of the circumstances in which he was placed, that the troops here did experience a check. With a force of 1400 men—no matter what the odds against him—he could not, as a general, stay at Newcastle when the enemy had invaded this country, and when so many small British garrisons in the Transvaal were threatened and considered in imminent peril. Arrived at this camping-ground with the small force at his disposal, the rebels or enemy—whichever is the preferable title (I have never heard them called here by the name of rebels)—bar the way; as a general, again, it was impossible that His Excellency should hesitate to give battle. Had he waited for reinforcements without exchanging a shot with the invading enemy, his inaction would have been open to the severest criticism. There was indeed no alternative open to him but to fight at once, trusting to the bravery of his men, and expecting fortune to be not less kind than she generally is to the brave. It must not be forgotten what the moral effect would have been on the Boers had the British force lain inactive on their front until such time as reinforcements could arrive. In all probability, emboldened by the belief that we were afraid of them, they would have harassed the camp, cut off convoys and small parties in our rear, and perhaps have detailed a force to watch, if not attack, Newcastle. This they could have done, and this they would do now, strong as they are in mounted men,—the point in which we are terribly weak,—had not the fight of the 28th January taught them a fact which they failed to realize before: that in the British soldier any Boer, no matter what his superiority as a marksman, will find a foe that must be respected, a foe not afraid to try conclusions with three times his number. On the other hand, our men have learnt now to look upon the Dutchman as a stubborn and determined enemy, brave enough to be worthy of our steel. Though his courage may not be of the "dashing" order, he, on his side, commands from us a certain amount of respect—a greater amount than was given him previous to the 28th January 1881.'

The view of Laing's Nek, as seen from our camp, began to get wearisome after a week's contemplation of it. From frequent observation, through glasses, of the Majuba Mountain, I personally came to the conclusion that there seldom, if ever, was a Boer on its precipitous sides, and that it would be a safe and easy thing to get a look over the Nek from the cover of the patches of bush with which the mountain was studded. There was on the other side of the Buffalo a high mountain, which certainly would give any one on its summit a splendid view of the Nek and everything behind it. Consulting Captain MacGregor, the military secretary, I found he had come to the same conclusion respecting the Majuba, and he thought it a much more desirable place for a view than the one beyond the Buffalo. He advised me first to go up the Imquela Mountain, which was close to the Majuba, but a mile nearer our camp. About half-way up the Imquela we had a picket posted during the day, and from their post the approaches to the foot of the Majuba could be easily discerned. With the idea of making a trip up the Majuba, I went to the picket on the Imquela one day, furnished with a pass from MacGregor to go outside the line of the farthermost vedettes. The Imquela I found nearly as steep as the Majuba afterwards proved to be. While conversing with the guard there, a shot was fired on the slope of the Majuba, probably by a Boer after game, so that was sufficient, if I had not the assurance of our vedettes, to convince me that the Majuba hillside was not exactly the kind of spot just then that a person would choose for a picnic or curiosity trip, so I abandoned the idea of going there. At the top of the Imquela I was told that a splendid view could be had of the Nek, so I contented myself with climbing up to the summit, leaving my nag with the vedettes. The labour was well repaid; the back of the Nek, the Boer Camp there, and another large camp five or six miles back towards Coldstream, could be seen even with the naked eye. At the Nek, men going and coming could also be readily distinguished without the aid of the field-glass. But what a beggarly spectacle was there! Pitched behind the ridge, which from the Imquela you could look over, stood half a dozen tent wagons, two or three square canvas tents, and nothing more. I could not believe my eyes. I thought there must surely be something illusory to the eye in the area covered by the enemy's laager at the Nek, until I was convinced by seeing a man ride up to one angle of it, pass in front of it, and ride on in the opposite direction from which he came, compassing the distance represented by the camp in a few seconds. There had been discussed often enough at Mount Prospect the idea of our General detailing a force to cross the Buffalo at a ford towards the rear of the camp, and to march them along the other bank of the river till they headed the source or could recross it, and so fall on the rear of the Boers at the Nek. The view of the country there to be gained from the Imquela was sufficient to prove at a glance that that was impracticable. The source of the Buffalo was intersected with numerous ravines, which extending out in every direction, barred the path that way most effectually. The alternative project discussed was a flank movement in the opposite direction, that is to say, round the hill I was on and round the Majuba to the right flank of the Boers. A view of that route equally proved the impracticability of such a movement. Compared with this route, the taking of the Nek from the front would be a mere bagatelle; the Nek was the weakest point of the whole position.

Speaking of the Imquela reminds me of a trap the Boers successfully laid there for our vedettes. It was the practice to withdraw the vedettes from the side of the Imquela at dusk and to replace them at daylight. Noticing this, a party of Boers went up before daybreak, concealed themselves close to where the outermost man ordinarily took his stand, and waited until the unfortunate fellow came unwarily up to his post. They met him with a volley, but did not hit him. He turned and galloped back to the main body, but before he had gone far he was mortally wounded by a bullet fired after him. The Boers then retreated as fast as they could, and subsequent efforts of our men to lay similar traps for their vedettes, in revenge, always failed in their object. It was on the Imquela also that the Boers during one night left a note containing sportive allusion to the prowess of the British. It was directed to 'Mr. Colley,' and asked him why he did not attack the Nek again. From the Imquela Mountain Sir George Colley had a long look at the enemy's lines ; the only disadvantage of this point of observation was that the Majuba prevented a view of the right flank defences of the enemy.

CHAPTER X.

BOER PETITION OF RIGHTS.

IT will be necessary to deviate from the account of incidents at Mount Prospect to refer again to the Boer side. As soon as they obtained possession and control of Borrious' printing-office at Potchefstrom they kept the proprietor constantly at work, and amongst the more important matters they had printed and circulated was their 'Petition of Rights,' a copy of which I append. It is a long argumentative document, but no record of the struggle would be complete without it. The official documents alluded to in it I have already touched upon.

'BOER PETITION OF RIGHTS.

'To His Excellency the PRESIDENT of the O. F. S. REPUBLIC and the HONOURABLE THE VOLKSRAAD.

'SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
HEIDELBERG, *February* 7, 1881.

'We have the honour to send you for your information some of the official documents which have been issued by our Government since the re-establishment of the Government of the South African Republic. They consist of—

'1. A proclamation notifying the motives which have guided us.

'2. A second proclamation, containing a number of serious complaints with regard to the behaviour of the temporary Government of Pretoria.

'3. The correspondence carried on between us and the Governor of Natal, Sir George Pomeroy Colley, also High Commissioner of Her Majesty the Queen of England:

Letter of 17th December.
,, 20th ,,
,, from Mr. Beaumont.
,, ,, P. J. Joubert, C.G.
,, ,, the Triumvirate.
,, ,, Mr. Beaumont.
,, ,, Mr. MacGregor.
,, ,, the Triumvirate.
,, ,, Sir G. Pomeroy Colley.
Letters from P. J. Joubert.

Vide Government *Gazette* Nos. 1, 2, and 3.

'4. Petition to Her Majesty the Queen of England, with accompanying despatch from Sir B. Frere.

'5. Copy of Webster's telegram.

'We request you to take notice of these, and to grant us such assistance as we are entitled to by the law of nations.—We have the honour to be, etc. etc.,

'S. J. P. Kruger, Vice-President.
'W. E. Bok.
'C. N. Hoolboom.

'But we feel that while we make this request, we have to struggle with the unfavourable circumstances in which we are placed. The distance at which we live from the centre of political civilisation, and the little knowledge people have of our history, make it very easy to represent our almost hopeless struggle for liberty and independence as an insignificant affair, or even worse, as an inexcusable rebellion of discontented and stupid Boers against an enlightened and humane Government, which has, for its own benefit, and to save us from our native enemies and the unavoidable consequences of our stupidity and poverty, been good enough to include us within its dominion. It is for these reasons that we deem it necessary to add an explanation to these documents.

'1. Who are we? Descendants of the Dutch colonists of the Cape of Good Hope, and purely Dutch people and descendants of the refugees, who obtained leave of the Staats-General to settle down in the Cape Colony.

'Between 1685 and 1806 these colonists spread over the whole of South Africa, and made it a prosperous settlement.

'The old Dutch colonial policy, similar to that of the whole world, was, compared with the principles by which colonial policy is now governed, very narrow-minded, but not more so than that of England. However, the inborn spirit of liberty and self-government of the Dutch succeeded well in triumphing over the despotical policy of the East Indian Company, and the Old Colony was covered by a prospering population, living by agriculture, the breeding of cattle, and the cultivation of the vine, and governing itself. The French refugees brought with them their ardent creed, and that spirit of self-sacrifice which had made them leave their country under Louis XIV. From these two tribes descended a people, *one* in language, *one* in faith, *one* in peaceful respect for the laws, but with a spirit of liberty and independence as large and as broad as the flats which they had wrested from the desert of nature and the barbarous native population. The European policy, after the fall of Napoleon I., produced a change in their political fate. They woke on a certain morning and found themselves subjects of the king of England. The king of the Netherlands had ceded the colony of the Cape of Good Hope in exchange for Belgium. The population had not been consulted, but was transferred from one owner to other like a flock of sheep.

'It is here that the root will be found of the later occurrences and of our present struggle. We will not unnecessarily blame the English Government at the Cape Colony; we will gladly believe that the different members of the Government did their utmost to treat the Dutch colonists as fairly as possible; but the belief of our ancestors, that they were an oppressed nation, under foreign supremacy, could never be extinguished.

'Collisions occurred; the Boers had always to submit, and were treated as rebels. However, the longing for liberty was not to be extinguished.

'One of these executions is remembered by every Africander as the murder at Slachter's Nek, where seven of their best men were hanged by the English. This occurred in 1817.

'In that year many of them decided that those who would not live under the English flag would do better to move into the desert and seek for a new land, as did the Israelites of old. Africa was large enough to give room to both. From that year dates the emigration over the Orange River, by which, in course of time, the Orange Free State, the colony of Natal, and the South African Republic were founded. We claim to have made European colonies in South Africa from the 30th to the 22d degree of south latitude.

'However, the main emigration from the colony did not take place until after 1834, when in consequence of the forced sale of the slaves, our old patriarchal farms were ruined at one blow. The political embitterment caused by this measure, which was enforced by a Parliament in London, which was entirely ignorant of our affairs, was even excelled by the contempt which was felt for a Government which forced us to accept a certain sum for the liberated slaves, while its measures were taken so badly that the money never reached us, but far the greater part remained in the hands of swindlers in London.

'Our emigration displeased the European Government. It invented for us the principle that British subjects took with them British soil on their footsoles wherever they went, and made each new territory a British colony.

'Natal was our prosperous settlement; we had our own Republican Government. Pietermaritzburg was our capital, but England landed, shot some of our people, drove away others, confiscated the farms, and declared Natal a colony. On the other side, towards the Orange and Vaal River, we were sometimes left in peace, at other times persecuted. At the battle of Boomplatz, Sir Harry Smith fought us with Kaffirs and Hottentots. At last a better policy triumphed. At last the English Government perceived that it would be preferable to make friends of the Boers instead of persecuting them. There was only one way of doing this—acknowledging their independence.

'This occurred for the South African Republic in 1852, and for the Free State in 1854.

'That we did not write too much about the Sand River Convention in our first proclamation, and that the English Government at that time really accepted that treaty as the basis of our perfect independence, appears, *inter alia*, plainly from what the then Secretary for the Colonies wrote about it in 1857.

'For years the mutual relations were perfect. The Republic threw open its boundaries to Englishmen, and many of them became good and loyal burghers of their new fatherland. What oppression could never effect was brought about by liberty. In the Free State, as well as in our country, the Africander and Englishman fraternized, and laid the foundation for a new fatherland.

'2. How is it that all this is altered? By a change in the English colonial policy. The principle of non-intervention was succeeded by a firm attempt to conquer South Africa for England up to the Zambesi. The unexpected discovery of the diamond mine in the Orange Free State, coupled with the expectation that similar riches would be found in our country, made this change extremely welcome to all fortune-hunters. Griqualand West was taken away from the Orange Free State; a similar attempt was made to take a corner from the Transvaal; but against the decision of the Keate award, by which this was brought about, President Burgers, in the name of the Republic, issued a protest, which has never been rebutted, and up to the present moment these lands remain to the Republic. All these encroachments on both the Republics took place on the pretence of defending and protecting the native Kaffir tribes residing in and subject to our State. England appeared as their protector, investigated their complaints, and came to the foregone conclusion that the Boer Republics were in the wrong, and that the disputed lands belonged to Adam Kock, Montsioe, and finished—how? by restoring these lands to their *protégés?* Oh no! by quietly declaring them *English* territory.

'All these measures were in direct opposition to the Sand River Convention, especially to Article 3 thereof; but there would be no end to our complaints if we enumerated all encroachments by the English on our sovereignty. The diplomatical correspondence between Sir Henry Barkly and President Burgers, from 1872 to 1876, is a chain of encroachments on our independent interval Government. All this reached its climax in 1876, when a subordinate native chief, Secocoeni, residing within the limits of the Republic from times immemorial, and our subject, committed rebellion, and forced us into military measures.

'At the commencement our operations were not very successful. With great cunning, advantage was taken of this by the opposite party, which made known to the world two novel discoveries, which were taken as the basis of hostile measures against us. The first was, that Secocoeni was no subject of the Republic, and therefore a *protégé* of England; the second, that we were too weak to defend ourselves against the natives. Sir Garnet Wolseley's war against Secocoeni, whom he, with the aid of the Amazwasies, and after fearful carnage, literally exterminated and destroyed, saves us the trouble to argue the falseness of the first discovery. As to the second, that of our alleged weakness, we desire to quote, as our best advocate, the then Governor of Natal, himself no friend of the Boers, but certainly one of the best English politicians, a man of truth and honesty, Sir Henry Bulwer, who, in a despatch to his Government, penned at the end of October or November 1876, stated literally that President Burgers had recovered his prestige among the native tribes.

'Lord Carnarvon, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, had no reason to doubt the unfavourable reports with regard to our Republic, sent to him by high officials at Cape Town, and by influential people at Port Elizabeth and Natal, and found therein an opportunity to carry out easier his favourite idea—a confederation of the States and Colonies of South Africa. He thought that an annexation of the South African Republic would be a benefit under the sad circumstances of the country, and accepted as such by the population, would make an end to one of the only two independent states of South Africa. The Orange Free State, then enclosed on all sides by English territory, need not have to be annexed, but would of itself, by force of circumstances, be forced to acknowledge the British flag.

'Starting from these principles, said Secretary of State for the Colonies, on October 6, 1877, authorized the annexation of the Republic in the name of Her Majesty the Queen of England, under the distinct condition that such could only take place with the approval of the Legislative Assembly.

'Sir Theophilus Shepstone took no notice of the altered circumstances that turned in favour of the Republic. More than this, he took part in the eternal disputes regarding the boundaries between the Zulus and the Republic, to the disadvantage of the Republic; he did not fulfil the distinct condition with regard to an eventual annexation prescribed by Lord Carnarvon; he threatened the Government and the people of the Republic with an invasion of Her Majesty's troops, and with an invasion of the Zulus; he declared, if the Republic did not yield, he would withdraw his hand, which now kept the Zulus in check; and, on the 12th of April 1877, he hoisted the flag of Her Majesty, the solemn protest of the Government notwithstanding.

'But he knew that he committed an injustice, and for that reason he did not go so far as to prohibit two officials of the Government conveying that protest to England as officials. According to that protest, the Government reserved to itself the right of its sovereignty. This speaks of itself according to the nature of the case, but it can plainly be read besides in that protest. We refer to Article 11 of our first proclamation.

'One of the rights of a sovereign people is the defence of its independence with arms in the hand against all who lay snares to the same. For reasons given in the resolution of the Executive Council (see same Art. 11), we did not exercise our right in April 1877. Have we thereby abandoned or forfeited the same? Only a layman or novice in the principles of the law of nations can maintain this. And whatever laws and resolutions the English may have issued in Pretoria, the people of the South African Republic have never been accessory to the same, and these so-called laws thus remain in law one-sided declarations of one of the two parties who are at dispute, which made use of its temporary power to force or compel the other. But more than this. We, the free people of the South African Republic, have never allowed this sovereign right of ours to remain dormant, but always kept it alive by different acts. Four times in these four years the people assembled at public meetings. In 1878, the people appointed a second deputation to convey its refusal to be British subjects to the English Government. When this deputation returned, without having effected its object, the people assembled *en masse* in March and April 1879. The celebrated interview with Sir Bartle Frere took place, and induced a High Commissioner to forward the petition to Her Majesty the Queen of England with his accompanying despatch. For the sake of brevity, we refer to both documents. In December 1879, the people assembled for the third time. It was then that the die was cast, and if our enemies want to make it now appear that in 1880 we took an unexpected and imprudent step, by omitting to caution anybody, then it is almost incomprehensible to us how people have the courage to maintain this with a view to the resolutions passed by us. Publicly the flag of the South African Republic was hoisted at the meeting of the 10th to the 17th December 1879, and under its protection the resolutions were taken embodied in Art. 18 of our first proclamation. Their execution was postponed to April 1880. Why? To give time and opportunity to the English Government, as may be read plainly in Art. 4, to come to a settlement in an amicable way. As officially as possible, these resolutions were forwarded to the highest representative of England who was then in our country, Sir Garnet Wolseley, with the request to give notice thereof to the Court of St. James'. We did our best to give it publicity; they were directly forwarded, among other persons, to the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone. The English Government cannot claim to be unacquainted with them. What we have done now, what we now maintain, or what we offer now, we said a year ago we intended to do, we openly published and promised it. It may perhaps be asked why the meeting appointed in 1880 did not take place? The reply to this question is contained in Art. 20 of the first proclamation.

'We maintain we hold the same rights which we possessed in 1852, and which were acknowledged by a solemn treaty of that year by England; rights which were not abandoned by a one-sided action in April 1877 by one of the best contracting parties; rights which we have maintained not only by words and resolutions, but by the most sovereign actions, while we have not abandoned this right by a single deed of ours.

'The use which we are now pleased to make of this right is simply a consequence of postponement adopted by us for good, humane, Christian reasons, for which we deserve rather praise than blame.

'The conduct we have assumed during three years and a half is characterized by the expression, rendered suitable thereon, of "passive opposition." This expression is not applicable in so far as it signifies that we did nothing but words instead of deeds. But in so far as one intends to convey thereby that we abstained from such deeds which would lead to an immediate collision, the expression is very suitable.

'Why, then, did we abandon the attitude assumed by us? Would it not have been better to continue in the line of policy adopted by us, and have we not by abandoning this line lost the claim for support? The last would deeply grieve us, but we cannot help it. We call upon God, who knows all hearts, to witness that we could not do otherwise than we have done. Articles 21 to 29 of our first proclamation shortly but essentially explain our motives.

'It must be borne in mind that even our most earnest endeavours to reach the ear of the English Government by petitions proved to be in vain. As early as in December 1879, we had to state we could no longer address England; there was no one there to answer us. On attentively reading the above quoted petition to Her Majesty the Queen, forwarded by us in April 1879, and on comparing the High Commissioner's despatch accompanying that document with his own important statement, that that document called for the serious consideration of Her Majesty's Government, is it possible to believe that no answer was ever sent to that document? that no English Minister thought fit to reply to such an earnest prayer of a weak people—unless one accepts as an answer the statement of Sir Garnet Wolseley, that as long as the sun shone the Transvaal would remain British territory?

'A mock representation, consisting solely of sycophants of the conquerors, replaced our Honourable Volksraad, and recklessly encroached upon our most precious rights. One of its last acts is the abolition of every guarantee of liberty to the burgher, who is eternally exposed to public persecution as long as the Government thinks fit. But this is only by the way. Good or bad government was entirely indifferent to us as long as we bent under the yoke of oppression in the land of our fathers.

'It was in the interest of our opponents to diminish the importance of our resistance, and to represent it to the world in a lower character. We ourselves do not believe that the true state of affairs was ever known in England. With a perseverance worthy of a better cause, it was written to London that there was only a small number of malcontents, that a few cunning and selfish ringleaders kept the agitation alive, but that the people, as a people, submitted, bowed to the change of Government. Steady perseverance, occasional attempts at bribery and intimidation, would, it was said, calm down the agitation. In the meantime the English administration at Pretoria existed for the first two years chiefly on credit, and the government was carried on with the money of English taxpayers. The rose-coloured representations about the disposition of the people compelled the Government of Pretoria at last to assert itself, and to prove with the ring of the gold that the people were entirely content. Taxation and the payment of taxes are the proofs of a healthy normal administration of a state, and the payment of taxes is the first and last proof of the obedience of the burgher to the laws of his country. Unwillingness or refusal in that respect is irrefutable proof that there exists a serious difference between the people and the Government. The Government at Pretoria here found the snare for its own untruthful representations. At the assembly of the people in December 1871 (? 1879) the question of the payment of taxes was earnestly discussed. Since the annexation no taxes worth mentioning had been paid. Of course, we only speak of direct taxes. But the necessity of having money in the treasury compelled the Government at Pretoria to take the collection of taxes in hand and to carry it through seriously. The people then took the resolution to pay no taxes unless compelled, and even then only on the distinct declaration that they paid under protest, meaning thereby that they maintained their point of view, namely, their protest against the annexation. In the first month of 1880, taxes were paid in this way for the first time during the annexation.

'But it must be kept in mind on what conditions this occurred, and that it was done by a people who in December 1879 had taken resolutions, the execution of which it expected in April 1880. The money was, as it were, paid to its own treasury, which was temporarily in the care of a strange accountant.

'We should like to preserve as much as possible calmness of argument, but when we approach this point it is really difficult. Re-peruse Articles 21, 22, 23, and 24 of the first proclamation. The Government at Pretoria was acquainted with the spirit of the people, and yet it thought fit purposely to misrepresent the same. The consequence could have been foreseen by every one except the wilfully blind. The taxes were to be the turning-point. On the one side, Sir Owen Lanyon was writing to London and Pietermaritzburg: The people are willing to pay their taxes; on the other side, the people said: We will not and shall not. A collision had to take place. One accidental circumstance, a single misunderstanding here or there, foreseen by none, would throw the match into the powder barrel.

'Why did Sir Owen Lanyon not then do his duty, and warn the English Government that this was the serious resistance of a people? If he did not know it, why did he not listen to the warning voice of the editor of the *Volksstem*, the noble J. F. Cilliers, who with manly courage for three years allowed no week to pass without enlightening the foreign Government as to the true state of affairs?

'Instead of thanking the press for its revelations of the disposition of the people, he saw in it an enemy, and directed his Attorney-General to prosecute Mr. Cilliers for publishing seditious writings.

'What writings? The advertisements by which hundreds of the people announced to the Government that they would not pay taxes.

'Why did Sir Owen Lanyon at this critical moment lack the courage to do his duty? Because, we say, he desired a collision, but on a position ("terrein") chosen by himself, and which position he, in his short-sightedness, imagined to be able to select according to his pleasure, and wherever it would prove to be most favourable to him.

'He desired to turn the political question into a criminal one, and the protesting burghers into transgressors of the law, whom he could then have easily had convicted.

'Then unexpectedly the forcible resistance of D. Bezhuidenot against the execution of his moveable property for taxes due served his purpose. Here was a transgression of the law with which it was easy to grapple. Here was a distinct illegality. Of course. As illegal as the refusal by Hampden to pay the three or five shillings of ship-money; as illegal as the taking of Brill by the Watergensen in 1572; as illegal as the throwing into the sea of the tea in Boston harbour; as illegal as the pledge taken in the Cape Colony against the importation of English convicts.

'All these are illegalities, but to these a people take refuge when the Government departs from the higher law.

'There was only one voice in the country; the case of Bezhuidenot is the case of the people. He refused to pay taxes, his friends protected him, and they were right, for we owe no money to the English Government.

'It appears for one moment as if the Government at Pretoria awoke to understand the deep earnestness of the people; in that way at least the mission of Mr. Hudson to the camp at Schoon Spruit can be explained. What occurred there is shortly but plainly related in Article 27 of our first proclamation. But that moment was short, and two days before the assembly of the people Sir Owen Lanyon issued a proclamation, in which he notified that he had learned that some malcontent subjects of Her Majesty would hold a meeting with the object of protecting transgressors of the law and rebels against the legal authorities, but that every one who abetted therein by word or deed would be prosecuted with the rigour of the law.

'Now there was no escape left. Sir Owen Lanyon had cut it off. For submitting in the case of Bezhuidenot and Cronje would be equal to our acknowledging the right of the temporary Government at Pretoria to raise taxes.

'It was necessary to prevent as early as possible that our serious political struggle sank down to the level of a common criminal prosecution, in which the prosecutor would have all the power, and in addition also the appearance of legality on his side.

'We have kept on the level of the law; any other step would have made us rebels. To Her Majesty the Queen we owe respect, but not the duty of subjects ("allegiance"). We could therefore render her no better service than to show our respect for law and peace.

'Our Volksraad, the highest authority in the country, had been adjourned in March 1877. The first thing we had to do, therefore, was to call it together again. The law provided by whom this had to be done, and the President having left the country, the Vice-President, Mr. S. J. P. Kruger, was the proper person. He did it; and the Volksraad assembled on the 13th December 1880.

'In our second proclamation everything that has since occurred has been fully described. We guarantee, as men of honour, that every word is the pure and unadulterated truth. Our whole case is a case of truth and right; it can only triumph by truth: to send false representations into the world, and transmit them by wire to England, we leave to our enemies.

'That blood has been shed is not our fault. Sir Owen Lanyon gave the order to fire the first shot. Peruse the 6th, 7th, 8th, 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st Articles of our second proclamation. We ascribe no motives to the Administrator of the Transvaal; if he did not entertain any, the facts speak for themselves.

'If Major Clarke had not given the order to fire at Potchefstrom, if Captain Churchill had not issued the military orders (see Article 20), our men would have returned from Potchefstrom with the first printed proclamation to Paarde Kraal or Heidelberg; we should have allowed the Leydenburg troops to pass on to Pretoria; and we would have quietly waited to see what attitude would be assumed by the Governor of Natal, who is also Her Majesty's High Commissioner, Sir G. P. Colley.

'We are in a position irrefutably to prove the first of these assertions. In Article 6 of our second proclamation, Mr. Lanyon himself speaks and proves that at that time (Wednesday, 15th December) our men did not think of attacking: "Only a part of them entered the town, and they behaved quietly." But there is more. We refer to a telegram intercepted by us, and published for the first time, from Mr. Duncan.

'At Pretoria, Webster's correspondent, Mr. Duncan, wires what he has heard at Pretoria about Potchefstrom affairs, and naturally as it was reported from Potchefstrom to Pretoria. Well, he says:—

'"A party of armed Boers yesterday, when the post left (that is, 15th December), entered Potchefstrom. They behaved quietly, and intended to return to the Boer meeting."

'Here is a distinct confirmation of our assertion by a neutral person. Our orders to General Cronje were to return at once after the printing was finished, and Mr. Duncan's informant naturally heard this from one or the other of our men, and wrote it to Pretoria, "according to truth."

'But, it will be asked, what could have induced Sir Owen Lanyon to issue such orders? Did he imagine himself in real earnest in a position to control the thousands of armed Boers living in the country with his few troops?

'There is one possible reply to this question, and however much we may desire to avoid anything that may produce unnecessary embitterment, we owe it to ourselves, to our good cause, and to the truth, to give a straightforward reply.

'The Government at Pretoria, misinformed by a few unconscientious persons as to the spirit, the character, and the courage of the burghers, thought it had reasons to despise us. It thought fit to speak of the people with unbearable contempt, and to see in the whole movement nothing but the cunning game of a few ambitious and avaricious ringleaders, who lead the people by the nose. We do not exaggerate. Does not even now Sir George Pomeroy Colley speak to us in the same tenor? See his letter to the Commandant-General of the 23d of January.

'Is not the correspondence from Mr. Beaumont, resident magistrate at Newcastle, plain proof that English officials think that they can permit themselves anything? To be rude, vulgar, and uncivil to Boers is nothing; they do not deserve anything better.

'Well, now, the authorities at Pretoria, imagining that they knew the people, thought to be very clever, and to dispel the cowards by a mock demonstration of power. After that, two or three ringleaders hanged, and the bubble of republican patriotism would have burst for ever. Peruse again attentively Articles 7 and 8 of our second proclamation.

'Is it not conspicuous how things were managed at Potchefstrom? On Wednesday evening Mr. Borrious, busy with the printing of the first proclamation, was warned. No word to the armed burghers, no warning nor summons. They are quiet (see telegram from Sir Owen Lanyon) and left in peace. Secretly a few families are received at the camp. Why? Because it was known what the intention was for the following day, and the loyal friends had to be protected from possible harm. During that night Major Clarke fortified the Landdrost office, and introduced there armed men and ammunition. The two private houses mentioned in Article 8 were also occupied. The attack was prepared and executed, and, as expected, the bubble burst, namely, that of the cowardly slander against our burghers.

'Evil punishes itself; and besides the accusation of having fired the first shot, and therefore commenced the war, Sir Owen Lanyon fully deserved the third accusation (see Article 28 of our second proclamation), namely, that of the atrocity of having shelled an open town.

'What now? We do not know. We must leave it to our God. We have nothing to reproach ourselves with. A people fired on without summons is justified in almost any act of self-defence. After the unconscientious attack at Potchefstrom on Friday the 17th of December, early in the morning, it was open to us, if we liked, to shoot every armed Englishman. Till now we have remained on the path of moderation, and of respect for the principles of a so-called law of war. But this does not help us. Our enemies still deluge the world with false reports. The honest battle with the 94th Regiment at Honde River has been turned into a murder in cold blood. Is perhaps the battle at Laing's Nek, where Sir George Pomeroy Colley was conquered, also a treachery? Probably, for there fell from 230 to 300 Englishmen and 20 Boers.

'Is there no one then to protect us? Not a single British politician, not to speak of a foreign power, who will intervene on our behalf? Where is England itself, the defender of liberty and right?

'Well, now, we shall persevere to the end. We trust in the King of kings, as we wrote to Sir George Pomeroy Colley. He will provide.

'First we have been deprived of our sovereignty by false representations, and now that we, after four years of unprecedented resignation and patience, make use of our right, we are not only fought with, but it is attempted for the second time to destroy us by lying representations, and to shoot us as rebels.

'Rebels—there is no one who does not know better; every English official, whoever he be, who applies that word to us knows better, or should know better, if he desires to be thought fit for his post.

'We do not know which is more contemptible,—the annexation of our free Republic, or our treatment as rebels.

'With confidence we lay our case before the whole world, be it that we conquer or that we die; liberty shall rise in Africa like the sun from the morning clouds, like liberty rose in the United States of North America. Then it will be from the Zambesi to Simon's Bay, Africa for the Africanders!'

Amongst other matters which the Boers made some capital out of were letters addressed to Sir Owen Lanyon by some of his private correspondents. These they published. One penned by Sir Morrison Barlow, the Swazie Commissioner, intimating that he would like to have the opportunity of turning the natives out to fight the Boers, gave great offence, and so did the following communication:—

'ESKDALE, *December* 17, 1880.

'MY DEAR SIR W. OWEN,—I have duly received your kind letter and welcome note of the 27th ult., and learn therefrom, as indeed I had then previously gleaned from the papers, that you were full of troubles; and I sincerely hope with you that all will end well, though from the unwelcome news quite recently received here, I am afraid those misguided Boers of the Kruger-Pretorius-Joubert party will try a passage at arms, and I more than wonder at the blindness of Kruger and Joubert, both of whom have been to England, and know the immense resources and power of England, that they should appear in such fruitless schemes of regaining their independence and republican form of government. I blame the Cape Dutch people much for all this trouble.

'I hope that you will succeed in most effectually crushing and stamping out this wretched rebellion, and trust kind Providence will favour you abundantly in doing the right thing. If Sir Harry Smith had them [the Boers] properly shot down at Boomplatz in 1848, we would have had no rebellion in the Transvaal to-day. My own opinion is, and so it was of that of many officers who were at Boomplatz, that Sir Harry Smith ought to have been tried by court-martial and received his deserts. It is a mistake tempering justice with mercy with Boer rebels, who were born such, and were such even in the time of their own Government. What oppression have they to complain of at our hands? They, on the contrary, have to thank Her Majesty's Government for their salvation from the cruel hands of Cetewayo and Secocoeni. No nation ever took in such ill light their inevitable fate as a conquered nation. We only forestalled Napoleon in 1806, who would [have] acted very differently towards them than we are doing and have done by them. We in this colony gave them lands they had under their own Government. Would Napoleon have done so? We gave them until 1832 numerous, ay, innumerable grants of land, merely for asking and paying survey expenses and like of title (whilst English settlers were debarred from such-like privilege). Would Napoleon have acted with like liberality? Of course not. My blood boils when I think of our Government making over to Holland Java in 1824 (the very richest and most valuable island in the world) for only £100,000, and it is a well-known fact that Holland in Europe is principally supported from the immense income she derives annually from Java, and for which we actually gave them three years to pay the money in, a beggarly country then, to take three years to pay only £100,000; however, it is of no use brooding over these things and vexing one's soul.

'I trust that you are quite well; wishing you, although in the whirlpool of troubles, a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, and many of them,—I remain, dear Sir Owen, yours sincerely,

'DAVID ARNOT.'

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIGHT ON INGOGO HEIGHTS.

CAMP life was beginning to get monotonous when an incident occurred which brought about another battle. From Newcastle by wire and heliograph we constantly heard reports that the Boers were moving down along the Free State border towards the Biggarsberg, with the intention of intercepting the reinforcements on their way up to Newcastle. To the Biggarsberg, which is some fifty miles south of that town, the General was in constant direct communication by means of the heliograph when the weather was favourable; but the telegraph wire running from Mount Prospect to Newcastle not having been interfered with, led every one to the conclusion that the Boers were chary of coming between our camp and the base at Newcastle. Our post was carried three or four times a week by mounted Kaffirs, who, for the sake of precaution, were escorted half-way by four or five mounted men. On the 7th February, the post left as usual in the morning about ten for Newcastle. After crossing the Ingogo River, and having ascended the heights on the other side, a large patrol of the enemy suddenly were espied making for our party, who ran for safety. The Kaffirs and all the escort save one got back to camp uninjured, although shots were fired at them. One of the escort, however, who took the opposite route, made his way into Newcastle. As we were expecting a convoy from Newcastle about this time, the General thought it desirable to see to his line of communications, which was, in fact, liable to be interrupted any moment, as by making a short detour round the base of the Majuba and Imquela Mountains out of our sight, the Boers at the Nek could strike the road anywhere from the Ingogo to within four or five miles of Newcastle, and we be none the wiser.

That Sir George Colley thought a demonstration in force would be sufficient to deter the Boers from interfering with the line of communication, is, I think, proved by the fact that no ration was taken, and not one water-cart accompanied the force mustered on the following day. He did not anticipate that the enemy would be encountered, or at any rate try to dispute his march, when they found he had artillery with him. Five companies of the 3 2d-60th, numbering 273 all told, under Colonel Ashburnham; two 9-pounders and two 7-pounders under Captain Greer, R.A.; and thirty-eight men of the Mounted Squadron, comprised the force which paraded at eight o'clock. The morning was fine and bright, and every one in good spirits at the prospect of an outing. Foolishly reckoning on being able to indulge at the hotel at the Ingogo in a breakfast consisting of delicacies which in camp were unobtainable at the mess, I would not spoil my appetite by breakfasting before starting, especially as it would have delayed me. There was, in fact, only just time to wash and dress, as I never had any overwhelming curiosity to witness the four A.M. turn-out to stand to arms, and had risen comparatively at a late hour.

The General himself took command, and accompanying him as staff-officers were Major Essex, Captain MacGregor, Lieutenant Hamilton, and Rev. St. M. Ritchie (chaplain), Mr. Stewart (Kaffir and Dutch interpreter, one of the resident magistrates of Natal), and Mr. W. Allan M'Laine, a friend of Sir George Colley's, who had been a lieutenant in Ferreira's troop raised in Pretoria to assist the Cape Colony to put down the Basuto rebellion. Arriving at the rear edge of the tableland on which the camp was situate, we came in view of the Ingogo River and the heights beyond towards Newcastle. The road down to the river is broken, and on either side hills offer cover to an enemy. The brow of the hill we were standing on is conterminous with the end of the Imquela Mountain farthest from Laing's Nek; so now to the right that mountain was no longer an obstacle to the view of the path that the Boers worked round from the Nek by to get at the rear of our camp. Here the two 7-pounders were left in charge of half a company of the Rifles, and the guns commanded tolerably well the Boers' nearest path from the drift or ford at the Ingogo to the Nek. The main body of the Rifles skirmished down the hill to the river, the Mounted Infantry scouting in front, whilst the two 9-pounder guns brought up the rear. Away four or five miles on the other side, we could see some of our ambulance wagons, which had been despatched for Newcastle at daybreak, at a standstill apparently for some time, but then they moved on out of our range of sight. At Fermistone's hotel at the river side we heard that the Boers had not been seen that morning, although on the previous day they had patrolled the country round, and wagons bringing stores for some of the roadside traders, close to Mount Prospect, had been stopped and looted. Our force crossed the river by the drift, which is a double one—that is to say, a stream called the Imbezane flows into the Ingogo at this spot, and forty yards above the junction of the two the fording-places are found. The water was not more than knee-deep in either stream. In the bed of the Ingogo there was, and very likely is to this day, right in the centre of the ford, a hole a foot deep or more, which has caused many a man to suffer grief and pain who had not by experience learnt its exact bearings. A short distance beyond the farther bank our force halted, and we thought we should await there the appearance of the convoy, or at most march to the heights a mile or a mile and a half ahead. There was no sign of the enemy, and I concluded the opportunity for breakfasting was too good to be missed. Fermistone—a pattern and example which Natal roadside hotelkeepers ought to but do not imitate—went over a list of luxuries, comprising fresh milk, eggs, poultry, etc., to which all but hospital patients had been strangers for days and days. The cloth was spread, and I prepared to obey the law of hunger, when a shot or two was heard from the direction of our mounted men, who were scouting a mile ahead of the main body, and simultaneously the advance sounded. Forgetting all about breakfast, I saddled up and overtook the column. Taking a half turn to the left of the road, the guns—the two 9-pounders—were unlimbered on some rising ground, and the Rifles extended and advanced in skirmishing order parallel to the road towards the ridge or plateau above us, over which the highway to Newcastle runs. The Infantry having gained the foot of the steep just below the plateau, the guns and staff followed in their wake. On either side of the road itself, the veldt or grass is studded with boulders, and the edges of the plateau, which is in the shape of the letter ⅂ inverted (the base being the side nearest Newcastle), are fringed with an outcrop of large blocks of granite, disposed in an irregular manner, with an interval here and there open. It must be understood that the approach to this plateau by our force was by the shaft of the above-inverted letter ⅂, and the ascent from this side is very gradual; on all the other sides the ground is steep and broken, save at the extreme angle of the letter, where the main road, leaving the plateau in the direction of Newcastle, is on a gradient less severe; there no gullies or ravines obstruct the way. Masses of rock—many of them large enough to shield two men standing—are strewn on all the slopes, and long, rank, tambookie grass, averaging four feet in height, was growing in amongst the stones on the slopes, whilst the plateau itself, which was to be our fighting-ground, was only covered with short grass.

The moment the guns gained the plateau, an orderly, galloping up to the General, who was close by, reported the enemy to be in force in front, and on the right concealed amongst the boulders down the slopes. The guns then advanced to the centre of the plateau, and the orderly in question was good enough to impart privately to me the hurried information and warning, 'Take the straight tip, sir, and keep to the left,' before he was called off to another part of the field. I didn't take his 'tip,' but followed the General and staff. Immediately on gaining the centre of the plateau, we saw, standing on a rise below our level, not more than 1000 yards away on the right, about a hundred Boers mounted. Our sudden appearance seemed to startle and confuse them, as they reined up suddenly, and waited a minute or two, as if hesitating what to do. There they stood, a splendid mark for our guns. Instantly the order was given to prepare for action; the artillery horses swung round at the double quick, and one gun was loaded and rapidly trained. The Boers in sight appeared hardly to comprehend the movement until our gunners were on the point of firing; then they wheeled round and galloped for the bottom of the donga or ravine which separated them from us, taking an oblique course to break the steepness of the descent. As they ran, shell number one went whizzing over their heads, and burst far away beyond them. Captain Greer himself urged his men to push up the breech of the gun to its utmost, and another shot was fired before the Boers could gain the cover of the donga; and this time it was a very narrow shave for them, the shell bursting on the hill-side just above them. Meanwhile the Rifles were rapidly extending all round the crest of the plateau on which we stood; those facing the party of Boers we had just seen fired repeatedly at the enemy as they ran for shelter, and still no one was hit.

A piece of cool courage was shown by one of the Boers at this time. He had been leading two spare horses, which were made fast to the animal he rode, and one of the animals being disabled by either a bullet, or a splinter from the second shell fired, was unable to go any farther. The Boer jumped off his horse and tried to drive the three in front of him; failing to accomplish this, he tried to drag the horses all together by the reins. Meanwhile about a dozen of the Rifles were peppering away at him in a most unmerciful manner, as he was now the only Boer in sight. Still the fellow persisted in his endeavour to save his horses, while we could see the bullets striking all round him. At last, probably warned by one striking too near even for his taste, the Boer let go and ran for the donga. Standing watching this from the edge of the plateau, I soon became aware that bullets were flying somewhere unpleasantly near me, and had made up my mind to withdraw from the edge, when Colonel Ashburnham pointed out that my horse was drawing the enemy's fire, and advised me to take him to the centre of the plateau. As I was leading him there, and passing within half a dozen yards of the General, the poor beast was struck by a bullet just below the knee. Rearing, he broke away from me, and the moment he stood received another bullet in the ribs. I began to think it was getting rather warm work, and wished I had taken that 'straight tip' offered not many minutes ago, to 'keep to the left.' But it soon became apparent that right, left, front, rear, we were completely surrounded by the enemy, who kept under cover, taking advantage of the long grass and the boulders so well that it was a difficult thing to espy a Boer. Our men were all lying down behind rocks and stones, and firing only when they saw a head or an arm of an opponent.

The artillery were busy at the guns, one having been placed on the southernmost edge of the plateau, and the other on the northernmost edge, overlooking the ground we had traversed in coming up. The engagement was by this time, 12.30 (it was almost exactly noon when the first shot was fired), heavy and general, and there were already several of our men stretched out motionless on the turf. It was the first time I had been under fire, and I confess that the sensation was not a pleasant one, for after my horse was shot I promptly 'took to earth' in the centre of the plateau. There was a small outcrop of stone there, not more than a foot high, and as the bullets struck now and again, and came tearing with an angry buzzing sound through the short grass, I calculated that the Boers' shooting was remarkably good. During the first half-hour the bullets seemed to come from our right principally, consequently I moved to the left side of the stone. Immediately I had changed my position they seemed to come from the left, so I changed again. I might have dodged round and round that stone all afternoon if I had not come to the conclusion that one place was as safe as another on that plateau. I think the person unoccupied in the middle of an engagement has a less enviable position than those who are taking part in it. After the excitement of the first set-to had subsided, and there was positively nothing to be seen but our men potting away and the Boers potting back in reply, the monotony of the affair became trying. It is wonderful how a man's sympathy with a nation oozes away when he is surrounded by their constantly pinging bullets, and sees his own countrymen killed right and left. Quite forgetting the little matters of history which I have attempted to relate in the first part of this book, I asked if there was a spare rifle and a spare place in the line nearest to me. Captain Smith was in charge there, and he replied that he had no men hit yet, and no vacancy; the shelter, though small, was good at that point.

The 9-pounder facing towards Mount Prospect was in charge of Lieutenant Parsons, R.A., and the Boers resolutely faced from behind the boulders to the hot fire that was kept up by our men there. The moment the gun had been discharged, the enemy showed up and pelted the gunners terribly as they sponged and reloaded.

To drive the Boers from their cover here, the mounted men, whose horses had already suffered a good deal, were ordered to charge. Major Brownlow of the K.D.G., their commander, with Lieutenant Collinson, led the troop cheerily to the edge of the plateau, close by Parsons' gun, and over the side of the crest. Before the order to charge could be given, the Boers in this quarter, now not more than 150 yards distant, gave them a terrible volley, which, however, seemed directed mainly at their horses, for, although immediately half the men were dismounted, only one was wounded. Major Brownlow (one of those who seem to bear a charmed life, for at Laing's Nek his clothing and accoutrements were cut by more than one bullet) had to return to the summit of the plateau; and lucky he was to regain it with any of his men alive. The artillerymen suffered the heaviest, because they had no cover except when behind the guns, and that was miserable shelter, seeing the determination with which the enemy shot from close quarters incessantly at the gunners. Captain Greer, who was directing the fire on the southern edge of the plateau, was killed very early in the day. Taking the fuse from the hand of one of his men, who was not moving as smartly as his commander wished, he was on the point of inserting it in the vent when a bullet, glancing off the broad arrow on the gun, killed him on the spot. His fearless behaviour was marked; and the same must be said of Lieutenant Parsons. Both officers set a splendid example to their men, and I don't think that artillery fire could be maintained under more disadvantageous circumstances than it was at the Ingogo. I had given up dodging round the stone that refused to afford protection, and began writing an account of the fight for the want of something better to do.

That the gunners were falling fast was evident from the repeated periodical calls for 'Another driver up here!' if the bodies of the men killed or wounded were not sufficient testimony of the severe handling they were getting. One poor fellow, with his foot smashed, dragged himself away from the miserable shelter of a few stones near Parsons' gun, where the wounded were rapidly conveyed and laid in a row to wait for the surgeon, and crawled to where I was and begged for a drink of water. That I could not give him; already every water-bottle had been exhausted, and now was a time when the heat was terribly intense. I tried to comfort the poor fellow with the idea that the engagement would soon be over, or at any rate that rain would fall that afternoon and provide us with water. He thought if he could only get to where the doctor was he would be better, so, after tying a handkerchief round his foot, he managed to limp with a little help to where the 'hospital' was. Here I found Surgeon M'Gan up to his eyes in work. The 'hospital' had for its only shelter the bodies of half a dozen artillery horses which had been knocked over. The wounded were mostly men from poor Captain Greer's gun; those at the other end of the plateau kept cover. To traverse the hill-top was unpleasant. Every one asked for water, which no one could give. Down the slopes, over the edge of the plateau, lay scores of riflemen, who could not be brought in. The Kaffir stretcher-bearers had already lost their leader in Mr. Stewart, the interpreter. He was killed early in the engagement, the moment he went over the edge of the plateau with the bearers to bring in a man who was calling for help. It was certain death to either Kaffir or white man who attempted to walk to any point of the field more exposed than was the plateau itself, as soon as the Boers had thoroughly established themselves all round. Mr. W. Allan M‘Laine was the only one who could give the surgeon any assistance, and he did that nobly. The rapid firing of the artillery during the first hour had almost exhausted our supply, and it was necessary to husband what was left. So short also were we of men to handle the guns, that the General ordered them to be withdrawn from the more exposed positions which they had occupied, with the object of beating back the enemy from close quarters, and their fire now was only at long ranges, whenever a chance offered at the line of Boer reinforcements, which began to stream towards the field of battle.

The General, who had been going from point to point of the plateau, giving his orders with a coolness that could not be excelled, and exposing himself unstintedly whenever there was any need for his personal observation or direction, despatched two mounted men to Mount Prospect camp for reinforcements as soon as it became apparent that the attack was a sustained one. Covered by a well-directed fire, and selecting a spot where the enemy were not numerous, the messengers managed to slip away without being intercepted.

Up to about three o'clock our fighting line had been confined to the fringe of that part of the plateau illustrated by the stem or downstroke of the reversed letter ┐. The Boers having crept up to the edge of the plateau denoted by the horizontal stroke of that letter, thus gained the level on which we were, and their fire from this position was very destructive, although at a long range, because they had a good view of any man moving about or standing. It was from that quarter that came most of the shots that told on the centre of the plateau where we were. One I saw the splash of on a stone which projected a couple of feet from the ground-level, and this was the place where Sir George Colley took his stand when not moving about the field. That bullet struck the stone whilst he was there with his staff round him, and was literally within a few inches of the General; but though it called forth an involuntary exclamation from the bystanders, Sir George never moved or offered a remark. He, however, directed Captain MacGregor to have half a company pushed on to meet and check the enemy gradually creeping up along this arm of the plateau. Captain MacGregor, having drawn off the necessary force, with two lieutenants, himself proceeded to show them the ground to occupy. He was leading them all, with only four exceptions, though he knew it not, to the place where their graves were to be made; he was going out to his own death-place. The spot to which he had to lead this half company was a clump of stones about 600 yards distant from our main position, and the 600 yards to be traversed did not afford a vestige of cover. Before the slight ridge of stones, behind which it was intended the men should take shelter, could be reached, Captain MacGregor mounted on horseback, a conspicuous mark for the enemy's sharpshooters, was mortally wounded, and so were several of his gallant followers. The conduct of the survivors who reached the point indicated forms the brightest incident in a battle in which every soldier behaved splendidly. I have spoken of the point to which this half company (I Company) was sent as one at which, when once gained, they would find cover; but there is not a stone there above the ground-level higher than would shelter a man's head when that man is lying flat on his face; nor is there one stone behind which those gallant fellows fought that is broad enough to protect two men lying abreast. In front of them, at less than sixty paces, a party of Boers had already established themselves, and they, it is true, could not boast much better shelter than could our men. I believe the conduct of that half company saved the Ingogo fight from being a ruinous reverse. Every man save four and one lieutenant died there. Their common grave is dug close to the spot, and it is well that that heroic band should lie apart from all other victims of the fight. The mound of earth which covers them will mark the site of their exploit to every visitor to the scene of the battle, far away from the larger grave. For months after the fight, no one who went to the spot, and saw the face of every stone that had partially concealed either a Boer or a man of the 60th, literally whitened over with the splash of lead, could refrain from saying it was a marvellous sight. The ground had a fascination which rooted you to the spot: here bullets had simply hailed. The mute stone told an eloquent tale.

That the Boers were at close quarters to our men in other parts of the field is equally true. On our left they were within 60 yards of our line, and their proximity here to Sergeant-Major Wilkins (who was known as one of the best shots in the battalion, and indulged in ninety-eight this day) urged him to go to the General and volunteer to lead a bayonet charge. Sir George Colley could not accede to this request. He had seen the way the 58th Regiment had been met at Laing's Nek, how the Mounted Squadron had never been permitted to come within thrusting distance of the foe, and no doubt he dreaded risking the experiment, for experiment it would have been to have tried the bayonet against such unerring marksmen. Speaking of Sergeant-Major Wilkins reminds me of a display he made of his skill in one notable instance. Whilst he was delivering a message to the General, one Boer, more hardy than the others, mounted on a white horse, came boldly galloping up the southern slope leading to the plateau, and after once discharging his rifle, mounted and galloped up nearer still. Bang went several rifles at him without effect. In view as he was of the whole staff, the General asked, 'Has not any one here got a rifle?' 'Yes, sir,' replied Wilkins, saluting, and kneeling he tumbled that white horse and man over and over down the slope with one cartridge.

Shortly after five o'clock the rain began to fall in torrents; for some time previously it had been thundering heavily. Now the downpour came as a relief to the poor wounded men, who had been suffering horrid agony from thirst, no less than from their maimed limbs. Later on this rain was to cause the death of many who, under a fine night, might have survived, if cold and damp had not stiffened them. Still we could see reinforcements in tens and twenties for the enemy filing round the base of the Imquela Mountain coming from the Nek, but giving our standing camp and the drift we had crossed by a wide berth. High up the river some two miles there was a ford they knew of, and used freely. Keeping through the gardens of Indian corn, and taking advantage of every donga and hill to cover their approach, they did not give our artillerymen many chances; but Lieutenant Parsons was ever ready to seize one when it did occur, and planted some shells at long range with splendid precision amongst them, causing several parties to wheel round and gallop back towards the Nek. The company of the Rifles which had been left in charge of the two 7-pounders on the heights on the other side of the Ingogo, also caught sight of some of these parties, and hastened their movements considerably by a shell or two.

After six hours' fighting, a white flag was shown by the Boers on our right. Immediately our bugles sounded 'cease firing,' and in two or three minutes there was a complete cessation in our lines. On the side from which the white flag was shown the Boers also ceased, but on our left they shot occasionally. The Rev. Mr. Ritchie went towards this side with the white flag which had been hoisted by us in response to the truce-emblem shown by the Boers. The moment he reached the edge of the plateau, the Boers fired faster than ever. 'Come back, Ritchie, at once!' shouted Sir George Colley, and the chaplain had to obey. We waited still a little time, with the white flag showing, but now all round the hill the Boers commenced again, whilst others, taking advantage of our inaction, made rushes for cover nearer to our lines, and those in the distance by the river faced about and approached the battle-field. It was a moment of some excitement; our men could hardly be restrained, seeing the enemy advancing all round. One of the few remaining artillerymen left, who had been working like a Trojan, and who was evidently a man of an excitable temperament, could hardly contain his rage. 'Why, hang them, sir, they'll have hold of this gun in a minute! Oh, just look at them! look at them! Oh, I must fire! I can't help it.' He made us all laugh for a minute; in truth, it was tantalizing.

Nothing came of the Boer flag of truce except quite a momentary lull in their life; and somewhat exasperated we all felt. There was nothing for it but to fight it out, and I will say this for the Boers, that as long as daylight lasted they kept up a fire which was certainly directed towards the place from which our white flag had been shown, the spot where the General was. I had been by there for some little time, and the way they plugged over and over again the bodies of the dead horses there, behind which the wounded were sheltering, was most uncomfortable for them. When the order to recommence firing was passed along our line, Lieutenant Parsons had a chance of putting a shell in amongst a party of the enemy. As he was training the gun, I noticed him leave it alone suddenly, and put his hand inside the breast of his mackintosh. The gun was fired, and then he turned and walked towards the General as coolly and steadily as if on parade. No one imagined that he was wounded, because we all thought he was bullet-proof after what he had gone through that long afternoon. Before he reached the staff he tottered and would have fallen, had not some one by supported him. A bullet had struck him in the arm, which incapacitated him from further service, and Sergeant-Major T. Toole, who, one of the most conspicuous for his coolness at the guns throughout the engagement, yet was not wounded, had now to take charge.

The Boers who had been working round from the Nek, we could see now, were bent on occupying the banks of the Ingogo, close to the drift we had crossed by, and the two 7-pounders were busily at work on the other side, peppering away at them; but the broken nature of the ground prevented the guns doing much execution. Just then Captain Hornby of the 58th Regiment, who had marched out from Mount Prospect camp, with several companies for our support, arrived on the heights above the double drift, and his appearance there caused the Boers to alter their plans, and to withdraw from the ford. We on the Ingogo plateau did not know this at the time, as the night began to fall, and the rain obscured the view.

The few artillery horses which had not been killed long ago were picked off during the last hour of the engagement, and the same applies to other horses belonging to officers or the staff. Smarting with pain, the poor brutes went galloping madly about, threatening to trample on the wounded, kicking and lashing out at everything in their way; now seeking comfort in the companionship of the uninjured animals, the next moment breaking out into screams, and dashing away like furies as they were hit again. We had to shoot many of the poor brutes to put them out of their misery, and to render them harmless. It was cruel work, this shooting of the faithful beasts; few if any of us knew at the time the extent of the loss of human life, or we should have been more callous about the sufferings of the dumb animals.

When darkness came on, the firing ceased on both sides, but for long after nightfall, as the lightning flashed and lit up the scene by moments, the whiz of bullets over the field told us that there remained yet some of the enemy on the alert. At last the firing ceased altogether; and now, when men could move from their cover, we began to realize, from the reports brought in, the severity of our losses. Rain continued to fall, and after the parching heat of the day the cold was severely felt by the wounded who were on the plateau. They were gathered together now in one place; mackintoshes, waterproof sheets, and all available covering that could be collected, was given to them; of stimulants and water there were none, save the rain that fell, and the moisture to be sucked off the grass. The night was pitch dark; an ever-increasing group of men collected about the spot where the wounded were brought together. They came, famished and hungry, to ask for water or a bite of something; for my own part, I know I felt ready now to eat or drink anything. Uncertain as to the movements of the enemy, the men were ordered back to their posts, and we only looked forward to the morning for relief. The wounded that lay all round the position, down the slopes of the plateau, had to be left to their fate for the time; some few, who by their cries or groans attracted attention, were brought up on the plateau, and attended to as well as the circumstances permitted. Every one was moody and sad. Captain Greer, we knew, was dead; Captain MacGregor and Mr. Stewart were spoken of only yet as 'missing,' but from the description given me by one of our men, early in the engagement, of the clothing of one he had seen lying motionless on his face, I knew that there was little hope for Mr. Stewart. In conversation with the General, he asked if I would have any objection to helping the surgeon and the chaplain, and I of course consented to do what I could. What was there to do? No light could be struck; no water could be got within two miles, and the enemy supposed to be posted on the road; no food was there; no further dressings than those already supplied. There was nothing further that could be done, except now and then to shift the position of some poor sufferer in that heap of maimed men.

Every moment we expected a renewal of the attack by a volley poured in from close quarters. The guns had, as soon as it was dark, been drawn in towards the middle of the plateau, and I expected the available pickaxes and shovels, one or two of which were fast to the limbers, would be brought out and some kind of rough earthwork thrown up. It was nearly nine o'clock when the General determined to withdraw the force from the field; it was evident that the men could not stand much more without food or water; a renewal of the attack on the morrow by the Boers, reinforced as they would be from the Nek, would mean certain annihilation of our party, and the capture of the guns, or our unconditional surrender. There was little hope of relief from our standing camp; in fact, the force left there was not more than sufficient to hold it, and it occurred to the minds of many of us that the Boers, taking advantage of its weakness, might attack it that night. Even had there been a sufficient force at Mount Prospect to detail a strong relief-party, which could overpower the Boers between us and the camp, the Ingogo River, we knew, would be an effectual barrier to their approach, just as it would be an effectual barrier to our retirement on our standing camp, if we waited till morning. With the rain falling as it was, that stream which we had crossed at knee depth would be a ten or twelve foot flood at every drift before daylight. Silently the order was passed round for the men to fall in in the centre of the plateau. There they lay on the ground for fully an hour, chewing the wet grass, sucking the moisture off the limbers and guns, and devising other means to quench their thirst. Sergeant-Major Toole collected all the available horses, and then there were only enough to harness the two guns and one of the ammunition wagons. When I found that we were going to abandon the field, and force our way back to camp, I told the General I would join the march, as I could be of no service to the wounded. He agreed that all that could be done for them had been done long since, and added he only thought it fair to warn me that there might be some 'rough work' on the way home. So thought everybody. Meanwhile scouts were sent out to our left, the side from which the Boer fire had first slackened, and then ceased as darkness came on. All the gun ammunition that was left—only a few rounds—was broken up and buried in ant-bear holes. Every man refilled his cartridge pouch, and the surplus cartridges were destroyed, surplus rifles bent and rendered useless. Every one who was to march carried a rifle and fifty rounds, officers included. There were three non-combatants besides myself, one of them a mere lad, who acted for a time as correspondent for a Natal journal. His practice with the rifle had not been extensive evidently, as, after he obtained a spare one, he inquired where was the ramrod to load it with. We persuaded him immediately to give up for destruction the cartridges he had in his pocket, and to carry the weapon empty, merely instructing him how to destroy the sights, in case the Boers forced us to surrender on the way. It must have been near eleven o'clock before the scouts returned, and reported the way clear, so far as they could ascertain, on our left. It is needless to say that no one was allowed to light a match or speak. The men were formed in a hollow square, with the guns and the one ammunition wagon we could horse in the centre. On one of the limbers I had strapped my saddle, having taking it from the dead horse down the slope as soon as it was dark, also the head collar; the bit I had to leave behind, as the poor brute's teeth were clenched so as to defy every effort to remove it.

When the wounded men gathered on the plateau became aware of the intention of the General to leave the field, their groans and calls for water seemed to us to increase tenfold. The Rev. Mr. Ritchie, Dr. M'Gan, and M'Laine remained with them, while silently we wended our way towards camp, every man ready to pull trigger. The General and his staff all marched on foot; only the gun-drivers were mounted. By making a detour we avoided the old road we had traversed in the morning; but our way lay over the veldt, up and down stony koppies. Momentarily, and at every turn, we expected a line of fire to flash out on one side or the other; but we went on at least two miles without interruption. Then we came to the conclusion that the Boers had withdrawn from the ground round the battlefield. If there was going to be a fight, it would be at the drift or ford on the river; probably the Boers, aware of our movement, were concentrating there. Had there been a single scout in the vicinity of the field, they must have, in spite of the darkness, been aware of our retreat, as the guns, bumping over the boulders in our path, made sufficient noise to waken the Seven Sleepers. Once we lost our way, and were at fault entirely how to strike the only road leading to the drift, and then the local knowledge of one of the two non-combatants with the force came to our aid. He was a 'transport rider' (*i.e.* an owner of transport wagons), and spoke up with an authority as to the direction which was unmistakeable. Acting on his advice, we steered our course, and arrived shortly within gunshot of the river bank. Avoiding the main road for the time, the men were drawn up on the very spot where, only a fortnight previously, Sir George Colley, marching on the Nek, had pitched his camp for the night before crossing the Ingogo. Here a halt was called, and scouts sent out to ascertain whether the Boers were at the ford, and also where the companies of the 58th sent out to our relief were. It was a long wait, fully over an hour and a half, the rain all the time pouring down. The General, thoroughly exhausted, lay down at full length on the wet grass, without waterproof or any covering but the light clothing he wore, and he quietly but firmly refused any overcoat or waterproof offered him. This halt seemed to last for ages; every one was wanting a drink of water—water which was only 1000 yards distant, craved for by all but obtainable by none. It was distressing. Cheerfully every man would have fought the Boers again, even at that time, rather than wait for water. The soldiers talked about the 'skinful' they would enjoy when once they got to the river; poor fellows! many a man had a 'skinful' and more. The wet grass, which every one in turn chewed, seemed only to intensify the craving for a drink; the herb was nauseous and bitter, and gave no relief.

At last the scouts returned. I believe it was Sergeant-Major Wilkins who led all this work. They reported the drift free of the enemy, but on the other side they had failed to discover the whereabouts of the 58th. Our march was resumed immediately. Knowing that moments were precious in the then state of the river, I went ahead with the advance guard and crossed the stream; it was then nearly up to my armpits, and running very swiftly. By holding my rifle aloft, I managed to keep it dry, but every cartridge in my pockets was under water. Only with the greatest care, and thanks to a knowledge of the whereabouts of the treacherous hole in the drift, did I manage to keep on my legs. On gaining the opposite bank, I scooped up and drained off a helmetful of the precious fluid; and then, urging on through the next ford, — an insignificant one compared to the first, — gained admission at Fermistone's hotel, after being duly cross-questioned through the keyhole of the door. Some hot tea and whisky was recommended by the host, and palatable it was. In a short time the other 'correspondent' arrived, *minus* his rifle. He had been carried down the stream like a cork, and only saved from drowning by being washed against some reeds at a bend of the river. He decided that he had had enough of the march for that night, and elected to go to bed. Next came in the General, and a gentleman who claimed to be a surgeon (a Transvaal surgeon), escaped from the Boer lines. He had been allowed free access to the camp at Mount Prospect, and had accompanied the Ingogo expedition, but not as a surgeon. From the General I learnt that there had been some men washed down the stream in spite of the precaution adopted of joining hands.

The march to camp was not stayed for a moment. So far the line of retreat had been downhill over the grass, now it was for three miles full uphill through a cutting over a horrid road. Whether it was the hot tea and whisky on a stomach which had fasted for thirty hours, or sheer fatigue, I know not, but the four miles to camp (three uphill) was a terrible strain on my walking powers. The 'road' was as slippery as a sheet of ice. The men tumbled, slipped, and slid at every step; the horses in the guns fell, and at last refused to draw the load behind them. After toiling at this frightful hill for three-quarters of an hour, I made up my mind to 'outspan,' in the language of Natal; that is to say, turn off the road and rest till morning. Captain Smith of the Rifles, who was mounted, would not hear of it, and insisted on my making another effort, holding to his stirrup leather. His men meanwhile had to lay hold of the drag-ropes of the guns, and bear a hand. It was slow work, with the obstacles in the way, in the pitchy darkness. Every now and again the men slipped down the water-washes intersecting the 'road,' or stumbled over the projecting tops of the boulders with which that road was 'mended' once upon a time. Keeping alongside of Captain Smith's horse, we suddenly came upon the tail end of the Mounted Squadron, or all that was left of it. As if matters were not bad enough already, one of the brutes in front lashed out, and dealt me a blow in the waist, which was something more than a gentle push, but which did not hurt me. On arriving at camp, I discovered the reason: the hoof had struck fairly on a leather-covered water-bottle hanging over that region of my frame, had smashed the bottle to pieces, but left me intact. How we reached the top of that hill I don't know; it was the most dreadful spell of work I ever accomplished. The remainder of the journey was not much better. The turning of the road over the grass to the camp was overshot, and we were marching on to the Nek, when the mistake was fortunately discovered and a try-back made. Just as dawn broke we regained the lines, after about twenty-two hours' absence, during seven of which our men had fought without intermission. Swallowing food during the day that followed seemed to me like swallowing brick ends. I simply handed in my telegram and slept, whilst Quartermaster Wallace of the 58th made his servants drag my clothes off and roll me in my blankets in his tent, where I had found quarters since my arrival. Good quarters they were, too, and good company was the owner, a favourite in his regiment from Colonel down to the drummers.

Since, perhaps, a more precise account of the battle as it proceeded may be gathered from the brief record I wrote during its progress for the telegraph wire, than I have given in the foregoing detailed narrative, I will reproduce it:—

'SKHEYNS HOOGTE, *February* 8.

'9.20 A.M.—This morning the 60th Rifles, 273 strong, two 9-pounders, two 7-pounders, and two 4-pounders, left the camp under command of the General. Nothing was seen of the enemy till we got to this spot (high ground), about one mile on the Newcastle side of the Ingogo River. There scouts were hard to exchange shots. The 7-pounders had been left on the ridge to the left rear of camp. The Rifles extended in skirmishing order, and advanced from the flat close by the river to the ridge of the hill. The vedettes came in and said the enemy was in force 400 yards on our right and left. The moment we got to the top of this hill, which has an area of flat of about four acres, we saw Boers, about 100 mounted, on a ridge lower than this, 600 yards as the crow flies distant. Greer's 9-pounders immediately unlimbered and let drive a couple of shells; the elevation too high to be effective. The Boers immediately rushed for the donga for shelter. The Rifles having lined the crest of this hill kept up a smart fire.

'At 12 noon, the Boers returned fire hotly from all sides of the hill except the rear. One of the 9-pounders facing to the right, the other to the left, pounded away for a good half-hour. The fire of the Boers then slackened for ten minutes, then recommenced, and kept up briskly from all sides for ten minutes.

'Now, at 2.30, the Boer fire is slackening; our artillery is not wasting ammunition. Lieutenant Parsons has just passed me, and in answer to my hail he says he has only five gunners left. The Boers seem to direct their fire on the guns. My horse was shot in two places as he stood by my side within ten minutes of the first gun being fired.

'The General was within fifteen yards at the time. The General and staff coolly engaged in directing operations. The bullets fly unpleasantly close, but mostly over our heads here, in centre of the hill-top.

'2.40 P.M.—Boers now round in rear, and keeping up a dropping fire.

'3.40 P.M.—Occasional shots still going on on both sides, but there is an evident lull in the fight. It is thundering heavily and threatens rain. The two 7-pounders left near the camp have not advanced, neither do we see any sign of a movement of our men in that direction. Captain Greer, R.A., was killed early in the action. Lieutenant Parsons then had charge of both guns, and coolly he did his work. When the fire at the guns was hottest, he was here and there directing the fire, seeing to the moving of the guns as quietly and coolly as if on parade. Amongst the gunners the casualties are very heavy. There are over a dozen wounded lying round me now, taking shelter as best they can behind the dead horses and limbers.

'The artillerymen were not more than 500 yards distant from the Boers; so close that our men used case shot and inverted shrapnel, which answers the same purpose really as case shot.

'4.45 P.M.—The firing is kept up in a desultory way; now dropping, now freshening up again. There is no knowing what the direction is going to be next, for it seems to go all round the hill. No sign of reinforcements from the camp yet. No water is procurable, and the wounded are sadly in need of it after being so long in the sun. We have seen small parties of Boers joining the force below us. There seems every probability of us spending the night here. I can see the camp with glasses, but cannot make out the two 7-pounders, though I can distinguish the rise they were left upon.

'5.15.—The rain is beginning to fall in torrents.

'5.40.—The two 7-pounders have just opened fire. The Boers' fire slackens. Lieutenant Parsons has just landed a shell into some bush on our right rear with splendid effect, as the Boers skedaddle right and left out of the clump. Surgeon M'Gan, only surgeon in the field, has been doing his duty thoroughly, and has been ably assisted by W. Allan M'Laine, Transvaal Light Horse. I have seen this gentleman a dozen times walk out to the wounded men in exposed positions and help them in.

'At 6 P.M. the white flag was shown on the Boer side, and the order was given to "cease firing" in our lines. I can see large numbers of Boers on a flat a mile off retreating towards their camp at the Nek, but making a detour to the west of our standing camp to avoid it and the two 7-pounders.

'6.10.—Occasional shots whiz over us still.

'6.15.—The Boers keep firing occasional shots, increasing now in number, so order given to re-open on our side. Lieutenant Parsons walks up to the gun to give orders, and is immediately wounded, and walks quietly back towards the staff as if nothing had happened. The guns recommence on our right. It is on this side the firing has been since the flag of truce was shown on the opposite side. Evidently the one party is unaware of what is going on in their own lines on the other side of the hill.

'The Rev. Mr. Ritchie goes down our left slope with white flag in an endeavour to get the truce observed, but the firing becomes so hot again that the General calls him back.

'I see the surgeon is dressing Lieutenant Parsons' right hand; his wound, therefore, is not a very serious one; and the two 7-pounders have not fired a shot for the last five minutes, nor do we see anything of our reinforcements now. The gunners are nearly all down. Rifles have to help to serve the guns, but ammunition must be falling short now, 6.30, as only 234 rounds were brought out. For six and a half mortal hours it has been dangerous to rise from the ground, and quite dangerous enough even when in a recumbent position.

'6.40.—The two 7-pounders are opening again on the enemy away to our right flank. This seems the only side on which the Boers are now. It is the direction in which they will retreat when it pleases them to make that move. I must say they have kept it up well; but it has been from first to last pot-shooting on both sides, except when our artillerymen were exposed and the Boers fired in volleys at them.

'Major Brownlow, who is in command of the Mounted Squadron, —only forty came out with us,—has been actively engaged on all sides of our plateau. I have not seen him for the last hour or two, nor Captain MacGregor, Assistant Military Secretary, or Major Essex of the staff either. For my own part, I owe both these gentlemen many thanks for their courtesy to me on every occasion when I have required it since my arrival in camp, and their absence from the staff reminds me how forcible are the obligations I am under to them. Colonel Ashburnham, who is in command of the 60th Rifles, is unhurt, and continues to visit his men all round with a regularity which must be getting monotonous. There seems little chance now of the post Kaffirs carrying on to Newcastle the mails which we escorted out to this spot, the same mails which were stopped yesterday almost exactly at this point. It looks at present as if we were going to have a night of it on this hill.

'7 P.M.—Our ammunition supply has not been yet replenished, while that of the Boers is practically inexhaustible, as they are now being supplied by their men who have access to their camp. I reckon, from the fire that has been kept up on this hill, at times from every point of the compass at once, 1000 Boers have been engaged.

'At 8.20 we propose evacuating the position, and falling back on the camp under cover of the darkness, leaving the wounded on the field.

'CAMP, 8 A.M., *February* 9.

'Arrived here about an hour ago, after a most horrid spell on foot.

'It is impossible to regard the affair other than a reverse for our side, though our men fought bravely and well, every individual.

'The retreat commenced about 9 P.M.

'The wounded, such as were brought in (about fifty), were left under the care of Ritchie. No water procurable. Few blankets; no other cover. Rain falling while we left. It is reckoned that 150 are killed and wounded, who cannot be attended to till this afternoon. Major Essex uninjured; Captain J. C. MacGregor killed. Flag of truce and wagons to carry the dead now being sent from the camp. Mr. Stewart, R.M., interpreter, missing.'

What were the number of our dead and wounded we could not tell until the return of some one who went out with the ambulances, which were despatched to the field immediately the General reached camp. We learnt that Captain Hornby's companies had gone out on the previous afternoon. Arriving at the Ingogo drift, and finding the water rising rapidly, he wisely determined to keep on the camp side, and occupied a steep hill directly overlooking the drift. There he stayed all night, but owing to the darkness and rain he was unaware of our march past below his position. In the camp itself they momentarily expected an attack during the night. That night, if ever they had a chance of taking the standing camp, was the one for the Boers, weakened as it was by the withdrawal of four guns, the Rifles, most of the 58th and Mounted Squadron.

At the same time as Drs. Landon and Ring with the ambulances, and Lieutenant Boulton with a burial party, started for the battlefield, artillery horses were sent to bring in the ammunition wagon we had left behind. Lieutenant and Adjutant Wilkinson, of the Rifles, also went back to the field with some spirits for the wounded, and unfortunately in recrossing the river was washed away and drowned. For a long time we were doubtful of his fate, as no one saw the occurrence, and it was not until his body was found, several days afterwards, that the cause of his disappearance was known. It was with difficulty that the ambulance wagons got through the river. When the artillerymen returned to the banks with the ammunition wagon, the water was so high that they had to leave it there, and shortly after it became the prize of the Boers, who had been passing the night at some farmhouses some two miles off.

The party which went to the field under a flag of truce with the red cross ambulances had necessarily to go at a slower pace than the artillerymen mounted travelled. When the former arrived they found the Boers on the field, but were allowed to proceed with their work unmolested. Sir George Colley had sent an offer to the Boer Commandant of medical assistance, but though gratefully acknowledged, it was not accepted.

Our wounded were collected, and their wounds properly attended to, and then were sent on in the ambulances to the base hospital at Newcastle. The dead were all buried, and the Boers left in possession of the field. During the night following the battle those who were left in charge of the wounded describe the time as a most trying one. Death ended the sufferings of many who were amongst the heap on the plateau. When morning dawned there was no sign of the Boers at first. Later on they sent a flag of truce up, and were evidently astonished beyond measure to find the General gone, and none but the wounded left, and were terribly disgusted at having lost what they considered would fall into their hands—the guns. The Boers were under the command of one Smidt. He and most of his men were civil enough to our burying party; other Dutchmen, however, spoke confidently—perhaps bombastically—of their immediate intention 'to drive back the 8000 reinforcements and all the English' into the Cape Colony. They could not believe that the guns had been taken across the river, as they felt satisfied that they had shot every horse on the plateau. They had killed about thirty-five; but for months after the fight the Boers insisted that they had killed every horse, and that the guns had been thrown into the river. Many a fruitless search they made for days after for the guns, peering into the depths of the stream in every direction. Of 293 of the Rifles of all ranks who went into action, 2 lieutenants and 56 were found to be killed; 3 lieutenants and 52 wounded; the adjutant (Wilkinson) and 8 men missing (*i.e.* drowned). Of the Artillery, Captain Greer and 3 men were killed, Lieutenant Parsons and 10 wounded; of the Mounted Squadron, 2 killed and 1 wounded; whilst Sir George Colley's staff had been further reduced by the deaths of Captain MacGregor, R.E., and Mr. Stewart.

Poor Captain MacGregor's death was regretted by every one. Generous and courteous to all, affable and of pleasing manners, he was a brave soldier, a gentleman in the highest sense of the term. Lieutenant O'Connell, who was amongst the dead, was a grandson of 'the Liberator,' and was a favourite in his regiment; and the same may be said of Lieutenant and Adjutant Wilkinson. It was now the turn of the men of the 60th to lament the loss of comrades from almost every tent. Of those who were wounded, Lieutenant Pixley had the most marvellous escape from death. Badly wounded in the head, he tried to make his way, while the engagement was going on, to the river to obtain a drink. Crawling on hands and knees, he raised himself once to take a look round to see whether the coast was clear. The first thing that struck his gaze was a Boer within a short distance pointing a rifle at him. He shouted to him in the Kaffir language, 'No, no! water!' The Boer was struck by a bullet from one of our men just when Pixley expected to get his deathblow from him. Crawling on again for some distance with the energy of despair, Pixley heard some Boers approaching, and hoping little, he feigned to be dead. This party of the enemy came across his body, stopped, turned him over, and left him without even examining his pockets or taking away his revolver. In his pockets they would, had they looked, have found in notes a sum represented by three figures. Lieutenant Pixley says that the sensation he experienced whilst these men were turning him over was not a pleasant one. When they had left him he struggled on again, and eventually gained the river, and crossing it, managed to reach Fermistone's hotel. Here he received every attention; but fell into a state of stupor, and in that condition he was when, on the night after the engagement, General Colley came into the place and inquired after him. For months afterwards Pixley was a terrible sufferer in our hospital lines, and it was a long time before he could narrate the details of his escape.

The death of Captain Greer was a serious loss to Sir George Colley, as the Mount Prospect field force was very short of artillery officers, especially now that Lieutenant Parsons was incapacitated from active service. Only one sub-lieutenant remained to represent the commissioned branch of the service. Connected with the death of

Captain Greer there is an incident, which, partaking of the wonderful to a large degree, is absolutely true. The gallant officer, taking the friction tube of his gun, was placing it into the vent, when a bullet struck the gun just where the broad arrow is engraved, and glancing off, struck the captain down. One of the gunners, taking the tube from his hand, was about to insert it in the vent, when a bullet, cutting the tube, fired the gun, which in its recoil passed over the legs of the prostrate officer. Captain Greer was a volunteer for active service with Sir George Colley's column. Obtaining leave from the staff of Sir George Strahan, late Administrator of the Cape Colony, he organized and equipped a division of field artillery from guns in store at Durban, horses purchased at Newcastle, and a detachment of a garrison battery sent up from Cape Town. I should have mentioned that, when a company of the Rifles and Lieutenant Young of the 21st were left in charge of the two 7-pounder mountain guns on the summit of the hill leading down to the Ingogo River, it was the intention of the General that the Rifles should be relieved by a company of the 58th. Lieutenant Jopp, who after Laing's Nek engagement became senior lieutenant, came to the relief of the company of Rifles; but these finding their road to the battlefield barred by the enemy in force, returned to the position by the guns. On the day following the fight, Jopp's company, as well as Captain Hornby's two companies, and the odd company of Rifles, returned and came into camp in the afternoon without sustaining any casualties.

The best that can be said of the Ingogo fight is to call it a drawn battle. It was not a victory for our side, unless it is of the essence of a victory to retire under cover of the night from the battlefield, leaving the wounded where they fell. But in saying this I am not casting any reflection on our men. Outnumbered, they held their own with wonderful coolness; and not even the superior shooting of the Boers could daunt their courage and steady perseverance. Lying against the sky-line from the point of view of the enemy, our men certainly offered a better mark to the Boers than the Boers offered to them. One instance illustrating the splendid practice the Boers made (and it is an incident that is vouched for), was that in which one of our men, shooting from behind a stone, had to change his position. In doing so his foot was caught in a crevice, and in endeavouring to extricate himself he exposed his body to the enemy. Before he could get his foot loose he was twice shot. At the Ingogo there was not the slightest show of unsteadiness amongst our men anywhere. I saw some of them pushing a helmet up occasionally to draw the fire of their opponents, and heard them arranging now and again this device, whilst another was to look out and shoot the Boer who showed up to take aim at the helmet. I have said they were outnumbered, and I believe they were by at least four to one, although Joubert afterwards told me that my estimate of 1000 Boers was erroneous. Joubert himself came avowedly with reinforcements. If there were not 1000 Boers present at the engagement when the fire was at the hottest, then all I can say is, those who were there flitted round the base of that hill, on which was the plateau we occupied, with lightning-like rapidity, for the fire came from all sides apparently at one and the same time. I see Sir George Colley in his despatch estimated the attacking force at 1000.

Shortly after the fight at the Ingogo or Skheyns Hoogte,—the former appellation is the more correct one,—Aylward, whose connection with the *Natal Witness* as editor had been severed, made his way to the Boer lines, and there corresponded for some of the Free State journals, and his communications were republished in the *Natal Press*. I will give an extract or two from his first letters, as they probably fairly represent the idea of the Boers about the matter. He writes :—

'Now a few words about the action of the 8th, known locally as Skheyns Hoogte. It was brought on by an attempt by Sir George Colley in person, with a numerous staff and four guns, supported by five companies, to force open the post road to Newcastle. There was a short cavalry action, in which the British suffered heavily. Their horse must have been mounted infantry; no less than forty-five of their horses lay dead upon the field. The artillery and infantry having seized a strong position, were very sternly attacked again by an inferior number of Boers, who shot steadily on until they had wholly silenced two guns; but tired out, and without food for a day, they drew out of the action at dusk, leaving but, as it seemed, a few survivors with Sir George and his guns, which were stolen away by the troops in the night, leaving the two limbers before mentioned behind, thereby showing that they have lost heavily in horses.'

On the 26th February he wrote in the following strain, which shows that, well informed on some points, he was misinformed on others. The tale about the 'column of cavalry' and Colonel Gildea's mortal wound are simple moonshine. The extract reads:—

'Urgent military necessity has induced the Boer Commandant-General to turn his attention to the town populations, most of whom, pure traders and land speculators, have been guilty of treason—professing peace and aiding the enemy. As a consequence, several towns will be emptied of their inhabitants, whose covert hostility enables some of the so-called camps—really village garrisons—to maintain a resistance that is hopeless, and in a military sense wasteful, cruel, and impolitic. It is much to be regretted that the British in several of the so-called towns—really villages and hamlets—have been guilty of two classes of foul practice. In Leydenburg, Standerton, and Pretoria, they have under arms some of the vilest of African races—Korannas, Bushmen, *et hoc omnius.* These men take an active part in the war, whilst at Wakkerstroom, 'Mkonka and a few other Zulu headmen are engaged in the defence of a station from whose possession only misery can accrue. Recently demonstrations have been made of an attempt to release this nest of treason and fever, and one column of cavalry from the British camp crept out as far as the Buffalo, but was driven back by a counter demonstration on the part of the Boer Border Division. Shots were exchanged. This was on Sunday the 20th. Then the British cavalry tried to make a camp at Doornkop, on the Natal side of the Buffalo, but this intention seems later to have been abandoned. The Boer total loss by death at Leydenburg is four, of whom one, Farrell, was shot from the British camp while at dinner. It is not known that he was engaged against the British. It was in firing on the town he was slain. For this murder—it is nothing less—a heavy retribution will be at once exacted, and during its infliction the village will be compulsorily evacuated by its inhabitants, whose safety it is thought to save during the last fatal operations.

'I made it my business to personally inspect all the hospitals and laagers, and on putting the question direct to the Rev. Mr. Merenski and the other medical attendants, I am authorized to state that "no Kaffir or coloured person, or man of mixed blood, has been killed or wounded fighting on the Boer side since the beginning of the war." In fact, the evidence is overwhelming that no such thing as a coloured person was, up to the date of Skheyns Hoogte, allowed to fight in the Republican ranks. The General's own after-rider is wholly unarmed. To what, however, the Boers may be driven by the cowardly conduct of the British troops, who outnumber them, and are now provided with a powerful artillery, and who yet use savages in the field, none can predicate with certainty.

'Volunteers desiring to enter the Republican service can muster at Heidelberg, but must not approach the main body till properly inspected and officered. The terms will be somewhat similar to those accorded to Von Schlickmann's volunteers in 1876. To those who desire military glory, the freedom of Africa, and the defence of truth, this offers a magnificent opportunity for earning, in action against the most famous nation on earth, that honourable distinction that is the soldier's best reward. Engineers, artillerymen, handicraftsmen, and drilled soldiers preferred; discipline strict, and captures to be equally divided, Government paying for munitions of war, etc., captured.

'The wounded are doing well, but great want of remedies is experienced, a mounted messenger having on one occasion to be sent nearly eighty miles for leeches, carbolic acid and the like being now quite unattainable.

'It was with great regret that the camp here heard of the mortal wound of Colonel Gildea, 21st R. S. Fusiliers, hit in a paltry and most unnecessary skirmish brought on by the British. More horrible is it to know that the Colonel was in no way inimical to the Boers, but was desirous to aid their cause, the justice of which he, as a soldier would, recognised.'

Sir George Colley after the Ingogo fight was simply powerless, except to defend his camp, until the reinforcements should arrive. Brigadier-General Sir Evelyn Wood, the 15th Hussars, the 92d Highlanders, the 2d-60th Rifles, and two guns, with a contingent of the Naval Brigade, were, however, now known to be between Ladysmith and the Biggarsberg, and therefore within a few days' march of our camp.

On the 12th February there was an opportunity for visiting the battlefield, as an expedition was formed to go there under a flag of truce, and bring back to camp, if permitted by the Boers, the bodies of the officers killed in the engagement. At eight A.M., two mule-wagons, with a small party of the Rifles and Engineers, the Rev.

Mr. Ritchie and Dr. Ring, proceeded to the Ingogo carrying a flag of truce. Reports had been freely circulated during the two previous days that the Boers were in force at the scene of our last battle, and we therefore proceeded cautiously and slowly. We had no difficulty in crossing the drift. Leaving the mule-wagons to come on slowly, and to bring up water, we went ahead, taking precisely the same route we had traversed on the 8th inst. When within 400 yards or so of the hill-top, we distinctly saw heads bobbing up above the boulders, and I looked forward to an interview with some of the leaders of the army of invasion. Waving our white flag, we rode up to the summit, noticing that no Boers showed themselves. Expecting every moment that a messenger would come down to inquire our business, we gained the top of the hill. What we had in the distance taken to be Boers peeping above stones, we found were only vultures. The brutes were enjoying a good repast of horse-flesh; there were 2000 on that hill if there was one, and so little alarmed were they at our appearance, that they sat within twenty yards of us, more indifferent to our presence than we were to theirs. I was not aware that vultures ever get more than they wanted in the shape of prey. Here, at all events, they had, for the disgusting brutes disgorged all around us. We concluded that there were no Boers in the vicinity of the hill, or we should not have had these hideous carrion-feeders croaking, and we were right in our conjecture. During the whole day we never saw a Boer, and were allowed to proceed with the sad duty without let or hindrance, except that of the elements. The rain poured down in torrents the moment we reached the plateau, and continued to fall, though in lesser volume, the whole of the time we were there.

There was some little delay before the mule-wagons came up, owing to the heavy state of the roads, and the fact of the party behind filling their water-barrels at the drift; and during the interval I had a look round the field. Strewn as it was with dead horses in an advanced stage of decomposition, the task was not a pleasant one. Where the Mounted Squadron men stood during the early part of the battle were ten carcases of horses and mules, together in one heap. A whole span of mules, which had taken a wagon with blankets and necessaries to the wounded on the morning of the 9th, were not far distant. The first object that attracted notice on the hill-top was the burying-place of the men and officers at the northern end of the plateau. Three large mounds, a yard or two apart, forming a triangle, with a boulder placed at the head and foot of each, marked the resting-place of those who had fought so well. On the nearest mound lay two helmets. In one I found six bullet-holes, five in the upper part—they must have passed clear of the wearer's head—the sixth had torn away the side of the helmet where the band runs, and without doubt was a fatal wound. Amongst the other helmets lying there were several which had two or three bullet-holes in them. Haversacks and pieces of clothing lay all about the field, and there was little need to make diligent search to find flattened bullets or splashes of those missiles. The Boers had, however, made a clean sweep of everything of any use to them. The bit I had left in the mouth of my horse I thought of recovering, as bits were scarce in our neighbourhood. But the Boers had saved me the trouble of carrying it back to camp, as the poor brute's teeth, which were firmly clenched in death on the 8th, had been prised open and the bit had vanished. Turning next to the spot where the General and staff had stood, the splash of several bullets on the stones could most easily be detected. Well away to the left front, 500 or 700 yards from this spot, and in the long grass,—that on the hill-top nearest the river was short, having been burnt recently,—I found, by the help of an officer who accompanied the party, the most advanced post of the Rifles on the 8th. Here there was abundant evidence of the fierce struggle waged at this spot.

The 'shelter' there consisted of a clump—if I may use the term—of stones, not one rising above ground more than nine or ten inches. It looked more like an outcrop of stone in a dip than stone thrown to the surface by volcanic action. Here helmets, haversacks, portions of kit, were strewn about, and amongst other things, I picked up a torn Church Service. Next to it was a sandwich, out of which one bite had been taken. Traces of gore were all round. The bullet marks on the poor shelter which the bits of projecting stone afforded to our men, were thick enough to make one wonder how, in the face of bullets which could pour in so close to the object aimed at, our poor fellows could hold that spot for six or seven hours. So deadly had been the work here, that our burying party had made a fourth grave within twenty yards of where the dead lay. I have already said that only four men and one lieutenant of I Company, which formed the outpost here, survived the fire of the enemy. The position this company had held stubbornly till death was the marvel of the battlefield. Returning now to the other graves to the rear or centre of our position, the wagons having arrived, the party set to work, and, removing a foot of soil off the larger mound of the three, the bodies of the officers and Mr. Stewart were carefully taken up, sewn each in a separate blanket, labelled, and put in one of the mule-wagons. Only the body of poor Lieutenant O'Connell, of the 60th Rifles, could be identified by the features. The earth was thrown in again, stones rolled over the graves, and our party left the field once more to the army of vultures. Before coming away, I examined, on the right of the position, the boulders behind which the Boers concealed themselves, and also the crown of boulders fringing the plateau where our men shielded themselves from the fire from below. From the bullet marks on the face of the boulders which sheltered our men, the only conclusion one could come to was that here, as elsewhere, the fire of the enemy had been perfection—if perfection it can be called with such intent. On the reverse side of these same boulders, that is to say, the side our men were on, I noticed several bullet splashes. These were of course from shots fired by the enemy posted on the left of our position. Aiming at us against the sky-line, those bullets which missed the mark passed clean over the plateau and fell on the reverse slope. Thus it will be seen that, though partially concealed by the rocks, our poor fellows were exposed really to fire from the rear as well as front. Several instances are recorded where our men were hit in the back whilst lying on their faces, owing to the trajectory of the Boer missiles. Respecting the boulders which sheltered the Boers, I cannot say that their face afforded evidence of similarly good shooting to that with which we must credit the enemy. True, my examination here was not as extensive as upon the hill; but still the fact was obvious. In several spots the Boers had improvised shelter by placing on top of a boulder two large loose stones, and leaving an aperture large enough for the muzzle of a rifle between. Behind this shelter, from the cover of which they could fire and never expose themselves, I found numerous cartridge cases—not the ordinary brass tubes used in the Martini-Henry, but in every instance the paper envelope and piece of tape which belongs to the Westley-Richards rifle.

Nothing but these tokens of the fight remained in the Boer lines. Down on the flat ground below their position were two or three dead horses, and also two of ours, which had belonged to the artillery, alive and grazing, but hopelessly wounded. The poor animals pricked up their ears and neighed at our horses as we approached them, and allowed us to touch them. Unfortunately there was no firearm amongst the party, or a bullet would have put an end to their suffering. Recrossing the drift, we arrived in camp about three o'clock, rain still falling.

A funeral parade took place at four the same afternoon, and the troops,—how reduced the number seemed!—forming a square round the burying-ground, heard once more the beating of muffled drums and the solemn strains of the Dead March in Saul played by the band, and listened once more to those familiar words, sad in their very hopefulness, pronounced at the grave-side of those who belong in life to the Church of England. The General, Major Essex, and other surviving members of the staff, sprinkle earth into the five open graves, and when the service is over, after acknowledging the salute of the assembled officers of regiments, linger for a minute to take a last glance at the open tombs, and then follow the troops to canvas, whilst the rain still pours down, and lends additional gloom to the occasion. So sad—so sad in their frequency—became these gatherings at our graveyard, that were it possible to grudge for one moment honours paid to such men as fell on the 8th February, one would say: Let the dead rest in peace where they fall, where over their grave there is every honour.

The burying-place had been converted into a graveyard by a trim sod wall raised round, with buttressed approach. At the head of the grave of each officer was placed a black cross, bearing in white letters the simple record of his name and rank. Twenty sod-covered mounds were thus early in the campaign in the enclosure, and on each one, whether covering officer or private soldier, some slightly-made device of a cross with twigs or even roots, the best material obtainable in the locality under the circumstances, was placed.

What puzzled every one at this time was the fact of the Boers being able to cut the telegraph wire between our camp and Newcastle, and yet leaving it untouched. I can only imagine three reasons to account for this: that the Boers did not like night patrol work; that they imagined because the wire was cut above the camp at the Nek by them it was useless along the whole line; or that they had a delicacy in meddling with what they feared might electrify them in an unpleasant manner. There were some rumours that they were tapping the wire, and by means of a cipher code which they had found in Colonel Deane's pocket, learning everything that passed; but that theory is not worth consideration, seeing that the cipher code had been changed, and that by the application of a tester the operators in our camp and at Newcastle could immediately discover any meddling with the line. I confess to having a strong suspicion, shared by many, that the Boers had spies in our camp from first to last. There was a good deal of laxity in the admission of strangers: they came mysteriously, and went when they liked, without a question even being put to them. Whatever information came through the wire other than by cipher, I believe the Boers of the Nek knew very soon after we did.

That the Boers occasionally were on the road between us and Newcastle was proved on the 14th February. That same day we learnt that the ambulances which, on the morning of the fight at the Ingogo, were journeying to Newcastle, had been delayed by the enemy. Mr. Smith, the hospital dresser, who accompanied the train, said he was stopped at Skheyns Hoogte by a patrol of Boers, who were drunk, and ordered him to dismount. When he hesitated they dragged him off his horse, searched him, and took his tobacco and pouch, and also his horse, and rode away. He proceeded with the train, but almost immediately the Boers came up again, snatched the Geneva flag from him, and tore it up, broke the shaft, outspanned the mules, and drove them away. Mr. Smith afterwards got a safe pass from the Boer Commander, to whom he made a complaint, but had to obtain mules from Newcastle before he could proceed. This delayed the arrival of the ambulances at Newcastle until ten P.M. on the 9th.

Speaking of spies in our camp reminds me that a Boer, representing himself as coming from the enemy's lines, offered to give Sir George Colley some information of the position. The reply of the General was characteristic of the nobility of his mind. He declined the offer courteously, but added that he should not feel disposed to place much value on the word of a man who proclaimed himself a traitor to the cause he had been serving.

That His Excellency anticipated a speedy termination to the campaign in spite of the reverses he had sustained, and that his mind was occupied in devising some liberal scheme which would satisfy the Boers of the Transvaal, there is proof in some lines which he penned to Sir Bartle Frere on the 7th February. He asked the High Commissioner of the Cape Colony whether he remembered sending him 'an outline of a form of government approved by educated Dutch politicians'; and added, 'I think with some modifications it might not be inapplicable to the Transvaal. I may be sanguine, but I still hope that this revolt will be followed by something of a reaction against its leaders and instigators, and that a favourable opportunity may offer for giving the Boers a somewhat more liberal Constitution, and one which would satisfy the demands of the majority.'

This letter, by the way, Sir Bartle Frere has called especial attention to, as corroborative testimony that, while he was connected with the Transvaal Administration, he did attempt to provide a liberal Constitution for the inhabitants, such an one as might have allayed their dissatisfaction with British control.

CHAPTER XII.

THE INCEPTION OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

WHILST these stirring events had been taking place in Natal, President Brand had relaxed nothing in his efforts to bring the contending parties to a parley. His influence with the Triumvirate was powerful; as an Englishman pleading for the establishment of peace between Boers and English, his efforts commanded attention. Daily he was in communication with Sir George Colley and the Boer leaders, trying to avert further bloodshed. About this time, Vice-President Kruger at Heidelberg addressed the following letter to Sir George Colley. Evidently it was penned as the result of Brand's representations to the Boer Government; in all probability, the outcome of an attempt on the part of the President of the Free State to convince the Triumvirate that if they made overtures for peace, a favourable hearing might be given them:—

'HEADQUARTERS, *February* 12, 1881.

'YOUR EXCELLENCY,—Having arrived here at headquarters, and having examined the several positions taken by the Honourable P. J. Joubert, Commandant-General of the burghers of the South African Republic, I have found that we are compelled against our will to proceed in a bloody combat, and that our positions, as taken, are of that nature that we cannot cease to persevere in the way of self-defence, as once adopted by us, so far as our God will give us strength to do so.

'Your Excellency, we know that all our intentions, letters, or whatever else, have hitherto failed to attain the true object because they have been erroneously represented and wrongly understood by the Government of the people of England. It is for this reason that we fear to forward to your Excellency these lines; but, your

Excellency, I should not be able to be answerable before my God if I did not attempt once more to make known to you our meaning, knowing that it is in your power to enable us to withdraw from the positions taken up by us.

'The people have repeatedly declared their will, upon the cancellation of the act of annexation, to co-operate with Her Majesty's Government in everything which can tend to the welfare of South Africa.

'Unhappily, the people were not in a position to accomplish their good intentions, because they were unlawfully attacked and forced to self-defence.

'We do not wish to seek a quarrel with the Imperial Government; but cannot do otherwise than offer our last drop of blood for our just rights, as every Englishman would do. We know that the noble English nation, when once truth and justice reach them, will stand on our side.

'We are so firmly convinced of this, that we should not hesitate to submit to a Royal Commission of inquiry, who, we know, will place us in our just rights; and therefore we are prepared, whenever your Excellency commands that Her Majesty's troops be immediately withdrawn from our country, to allow them to retire with all honours, and we ourselves will leave the positions as taken up by us. Should, however, the annexation be persevered in, and the spilling of blood proceeded with by you, we, subject to will of God, will bow to our fate, and to the last man combat against the injustice and violence done to us, and throw entirely on your shoulders the responsibility of all the miseries which will befall this country.—I have, etc.,

'S. J. P. KRUGER, Vice-President.
'W. EDWARD BOK, State Secretary.'

Sir George Colley's reply, nine days later, was from Newcastle, whence he personally had gone:—

'ARMY HEADQUARTERS, NEWCASTLE, *February* 21, 1881.

'SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th inst.

'In reply, I am to inform you that on the Boers now in arms against Her Majesty's authority ceasing armed opposition, Her Majesty's Government will be ready to appoint a Commission, with large powers, who may develop the scheme referred to in Lord Kimberley's telegram of the 8th inst., communicated to you through His Honour President Brand.

'I am to add that upon this proposal being accepted within forty-eight hours, I have authority to agree to a suspension of hostilities on our part.—I have, etc.,

'G. POMEROY COLLEY,
Major-General Commanding Forces.

'P. Kruger, Esq., Heidelberg.'

Whether the stipulation limiting the time for acceptance was one made by the General himself, or dictated in his instructions from England, I don't know, but it is certain that it was a physical impossibility for that message to be conveyed by any available power—since the telegraph wire was broken—from Newcastle to Heidelberg in forty-eight hours. Whoever the proposal originally emanated from, it was as empty therefore as the wind, and useless as a step towards a peaceful solution of the differences between Boers and English. It rather had the contrary effect, because it irritated the leaders. They would reason, naturally enough, that they were simply being played with.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BOER ADVANCE INTO NATAL—A RECONNAISSANCE.

TO return to the camp at Mount Prospect, reports coming from the Biggarsberg showed us that the Boers were sending down a strong force there, with the intention of carrying out their threat of driving back our reinforcements, or at least of disputing the way with them. The Biggarsberg is a short range of hills on the main road between Ladysmith and Newcastle, and over the lowest point of the chain the troops would have to march. The position, as a defensive one, might be compared to Laing's Nek, but with these disadvantages, that a flank movement on no very extensive scale would bring our force round to the rear of the enemy, should they seize the Nek at the Biggarsberg, and try to prevent Sir Evelyn Wood marching on Newcastle. Supposing the idea of electing to try conclusions with the British at the Biggarsberg were abandoned, there was still another spot nearer Newcastle which offered enormous advantages to any force bent on defending it and blocking the road. This was at the Ingogane River. There the approach to the drift or ford from the Biggarsberg direction is for miles along a flat; but commanding the ford on the Newcastle side are steep, stony hills, over which the main road is cut. If our reinforcements reached the Biggarsberg before the Boers did, there would of course be nothing for the enemy to do but fall back on the Ingogane; the first comers would be the first served by the position.

Whatever spot the Boers selected for making a stand, it was evident that the next fight would be south of Newcastle, and nowhere near Mount Prospect. On the 14th February I had personally made up my mind to go to the Biggarsberg; but there was one serious hindrance, and that was my inability to replace my riding-horse. A horse was not to be got for love or money; the ordnance people bought up everything in the shape of horse-flesh obtainable at the camp or in its neighbourhood. That night, long after 'lights out' had sounded, I lay awake, pondering over the problem how to get a horse. When on the point of falling off to sleep, I heard the rattle of horses' bits close by, and out of curiosity to see what brought the sound so near the tents, got up and went outside. Behind the General's tent, thirty yards away, I found half a dozen horses ready saddled, and recognised amongst them a notable dappled grey which Sir George rode. The night was lit by the moon, at this time about full, but a thick mist prevented the eye from seeing many yards. Besides the six horses near the staff tents, I found there were a dozen of the Mounted Squadron men armed, standing by their chargers, saddled up near our laager. Immediately I became convinced that Sir George Colley was going to make an attempt to get to Newcastle under cover of the night, and obtaining the Mounted Police there as an escort, go on to the Biggarsberg, and himself superintend any fighting that was to take place. Cursing my luck, I went back to Wallace's tent, and stood inside the flap. In a short time Sir George Colley and his staff turned out quietly, mounted, and, accompanied by the escort of the Mounted Squadron, rode noiselessly away to the rear of the camp, taking a path which our post Kaffirs invariably used at night to go to Newcastle. This path led to a drift on the Buffalo in our right rear. Crossing the river, and keeping along the banks on the Transvaal side, there was an easy way to Newcastle, shorter than by the main road, and considerably safer, so far as a chance of meeting the enemy was concerned, than the main road on the left of our camp, over the Ingogo River, and past the battlefield and Skheyns Hoogte. At this time, it must be remembered that the Boers were believed by us to be in force on the main road between us and Newcastle. It was useless to think of asking permission to accompany the General, for the simple reason that I had no saddle-horse. I tried to console myself with the reflection that on the following day (it was now about midnight) I would be on my way to the Biggarsberg if I had to beg, borrow, or steal a horse to do the journey with. Nevertheless, I puzzled for at least two or three hours longer where I should be able to beg, borrow, or steal; sleep I could not. Tired out at last, I was beginning to doze when the sound of hoofs on the turf roused me again. Looking out of the tent once more, there was the General and staff back; they had been away three or four hours; and I was glad to see them, for I was satisfied that my previous conjecture was a mistake, although there was something mysterious in this silent night business.

Next day, in the course of a casual conversation with the General, I asked him what he would do if he were a correspondent, remain at Mount Prospect or go to the Biggarsberg, and mentioned that I would like to see the next engagement. 'I think if I were a correspondent I should go to the Biggarsberg at once,' he replied. I thanked him for the hint, and said I should start that night with the post Kaffir, if he had no objection. No, he had none; and if I would let him know before I started, he would give me a note for Sir Evelyn Wood. By three o'clock I had managed to secure a horse, and thinking there could be no greater risk in going along the main road by daylight than by moonlight with the post Kaffir,—a gentleman certain to be roughly handled if intercepted by the enemy,—I determined to start at once. By doing so, I should reach Newcastle before nightfall, rest for an hour or two, and go on by a circuitous route that night to the Biggarsberg with a guide. When I mentioned my change of plans to the General, he gave me his note to Sir Evelyn, and said he thought perhaps one route was as safe as the other to Newcastle; and I added, 'The night is almost as clear as daylight with this full moon.' 'Yes,' he replied; 'for though it may be hazy up here, on the low ground by the river there is no mist.' 'As was the case last night,' I replied. With a look that seemed to inquire my meaning, he hesitated for a moment, and then added, 'Yes; that is true.' I felt certain then that His Excellency had been trying the road to Newcastle on the previous night. Later in the day I knew it was a fact that he had gone some way, and when getting down by the river had ascertained from his advanced scouts that the Boers were close to De Wet's farm, a point that he would have to pass near.

Travelling along the road past the Ingogo, I saw nothing to alarm any one, and thinking there were no Boers about, and impelled by curiosity to have an interview with a Dutch farmer, who was supposed to have something more than a strong sympathy with the enemy, I called at a house not a thousand miles from the Skheyns Hoogte. The place, however, seemed deserted, shutters up and doors locked, and after going round twice and getting no reply, I continued on my way to Newcastle. In the manger in the stable I noticed some ends of green barley which looked fresh cut, but I thought nothing of that at the time. With the idea of making a short cut, I struck to the right of the road, after getting out of the Skheyns Hoogte valley, and after riding across the veldt for ten minutes, saw two horsemen ahead some distance coming towards me. No sooner had I noticed them than they wheeled round and made for a kopje close to the road I had left on my left hand. I thought it best to go to them, but on arriving at the kopje I was surprised to find no one there; but about a mile away, making for Newcastle as hard as they could travel, were the two gentlemen I had reckoned on finding under cover of the kopje. Waving a handkerchief to show that I was a friend, I at last got up with them. They were Messrs. Fawcus and Read, one a refugee from the Transvaal, and the other a clerk. I said, 'Well, you are pretty fellows, running like mad from one man.' 'We never saw you till five minutes ago, when you waved a handkerchief.' 'What! you didn't turn when you saw me off the road on the veldt?' 'Not at all.' 'Then what did you gallop for?' 'Look behind, and you'll see; they were trying to cut you off.' Looking behind for the first time, I discovered the reason for the sudden change of route of my companions. About a mile and a half behind were three or four mounted men, and I have a strong suspicion they had followed me from the Skheyns Hoogte, with the intention of inquiring my business. Probably but for my short cut across the veldt they would have overhauled me. Colonists generally say that short cuts do not pay, unless you know your ground thoroughly; in this instance, the short cut worked out very well for me. Within four miles of Newcastle, we had not the gentlemen to the rear following us very long; they turned off towards the Free State road, taking a bee line across country.

At Newcastle, Major Ogilvie told me that the Mounted Police were going to start immediately from the magistrates' office in town for the Biggarsberg, so I thought of accompanying them. When I got down in town I heard that the order was countermanded for the Mounted Police to march, and subsequently that the road was clear between here and the Biggarsberg; in fact, Sir Evelyn Wood had crossed the Ingogane River without opposition. Continuing my journey, after a rest, I found it was so, as I met the General, attended only by a troop of Hussars, not far out of Newcastle on the following morning. From him I learned that by a forced march from the Biggarsberg to the Ingogane he had arrived there long before the Boers expected him. He camped on the heights they said they would occupy, and when they discovered that, they went straight back to Laing's Nek in haste.

Returning to Newcastle, some civilians riding out from that insalubrious and disreputable village met us, and, not recognising in the soldier mounted on a pony, and attended only by a few Hussars, a General, pointed with no little excitement to some mounted men on a ridge to our right, and declared they were 'the Boers.' 'Oh, indeed,' said the General, looking round at the figures on the skyline. 'Give me a five-pound note, and I'll ride up there alone,' he added, as if touched with a generous impulse. Our friends looked puzzled, and then one, with more ready, low humour than discernment, replied, 'Oh, that'll do for you, old cock!' His comrades passed on laughing, and so did Sir Evelyn, after this introduction to a section of Newcastle gentry. On reaching the place called by a great stretch of courtesy 'the town of Newcastle,' we heard that Sir George Colley with some of his staff had arrived there that morning. Sir Evelyn immediately went and conferred with him.

No sooner had Sir Evelyn arrived at Newcastle than he made a reconnaissance towards Wakkerstroom, doubtless with the intention of ascertaining the practicability of that route to reach the back of the Nek. Starting at midnight on the 19th February, with two troops of Hussars and W. Leathem and Fawcus as guides, 150 men of the 92d were posted at the Buffalo drift to cover the retreat of the party, in case they had to retire, and after a smart ride we came in sight of Wakkerstroom at daybreak. Not a Boer was to be seen; the laager that the enemy had built was apparently abandoned. If he had had a couple of mountain guns with him, the General said he would have gone into the town; with the small force under him at this time, it would have been foolish to have ventured into the town and stood the chance of being shut up there for the remainder of the war. The party therefore retraced their steps to Newcastle, and arrived at sundown, after a sixty-mile ride in the Transvaal without seeing a Boer.

The war was now beginning to attract more than ordinary attention. Correspondents began to flock into Natal. Cameron of the *Standard* had already been in Newcastle several days; in fact, had seen the Ingogo fight from a distant hill. Hay for the *Daily News*, and Lady Florence Dixie for the *Morning Post*, were on their way to the scene of operations. Hearing from Sir Evelyn that there was no chance of a forward movement for two days, I took a trip down to the Biggarsberg, where I expected to meet the Inniskillings and the battery of artillery marching up.

At Adendorff's farm, about an hour's ride out of Newcastle, I found a troop of the Mounted Police camped there as a precautionary measure. Captain Robertson, with the last company of 92d Highlanders on the road, had just arrived, and would reach Newcastle that afternoon. At the Ingogane River, posted on the heights, was a company of the 97th, and another troop of Mounted Police.

The 97th had thrown up defence lines; but their position was not as good as it might have been, seeing that their ground was commanded by a hill higher than that on which they had pitched their tents. At the Biggarsberg were two or three companies of the 97th, posted in a strong position at the Nek; other companies of the same regiment were stationed at Ladysmith and Colenso, a precaution not unnecessary, considering who our neighbours are in this district of Natal, and the proximity of the Free State border.

The Inniskillings and the artillery I learnt would not be at Newcastle for four or five days, and that the various companies of the 97th would be relieved by other regiments coming up from the Port, and have a chance of seeing more active service than that of garrison work. The one wish of every man was to meet the Boers, and wipe out the reverses we had sustained up to the present in this war. The first question put to any one supposed to have the latest news was: 'What is this talk about an armistice? It never surely can be.' There was talk about an armistice at this time (February 21), and it created as much sensation as the news of another battle ending in a reverse for us would have done.

It was also reported that the Boer female population of the Transvaal, who encouraged and incited the men to drive the English out of the country, had discovered, with the astuteness peculiar to their sex, that the English were being fast driven into Natal, *en route* to the Transvaal, notwithstanding the successes of the Boers. The ladies, it was said, had also discovered that war was not a desirable occupation for those whose call is rather to the herding of cattle and money-making by pastoral pursuits. Hence the report that the ladies of the Transvaal were now clamouring for peace, and using their mighty influence accordingly. This rumour, immensely absurd as it seemed, or any other rumour equally absurd, was accepted as gospel truth; no one imagined for a moment that it was the British taxpayer and not the Boers, male or female, who were paving the way to peace.

Between the Ingogane and the town of Newcastle there was ample evidence of the trek of the Boers to the Biggarsberg. Outside Knox Hotel there was a stench of beer rising from the veldt not pleasant. The commando which honoured this house with a visit, though behaving well to the proprietor, broke about sixty hogsheads of beer on some wagons outspanned close by, drank freely of the precious fluid, and let the remainder run on the ground. I cannot conceive what their object was unless to annoy our poor weary soldiers as they would pass the spot and sigh for a draught of that luxury, which had been wasted so freely on the veldt. The wagons carrying this beer were, with their oxen, taken by the Boers.

Amongst other mischief the Boers did here was to cut adrift the punt, and all efforts to replace it had been unavailing. The punt was private property, as were the wagons; but some justification may be found for the interference with the punt, as it was of great service to the military when the river was high, and that is frequently the case at this time of the year.

At the Horne River, nearer Newcastle, all that remained of two wagons seized by the Boers was the iron work; ploughshares and empty preserve pots and sardine tins, charred and blackened, all that was left of the loads the wagons contained. The same applies to one wagon, a mile the other side of the Horne River. My impression was—a serious or frivolous one, as you please—that these wagons saved our reinforcements an attack. I believe if the Boers consumed the contents of the jam pots and sardine tins lying on the road, and afterwards drank till they were satisfied of the beer and other liquids in the wagons, they made themselves so ill that they were not in a fit state to fight until at least forty-eight hours after the repast. It is well known to those who have experience in storekeeping in these parts, that a Dutchman who fancies a light lunch will buy and eat alternately a few sweets and a box or two of sardines, despising such condiments as bread or biscuit on such an occasion. A Dutchman, however, is not very extravagant with these delicacies when he has to pay for them; but when the supply is to his hand unlimited and gratis, the Boer is quite capable of indiscretion in his feeding.

From a transport-rider who had come from Ladysmith with two wagons unmolested,—fortunate man, he played the 'old colonist' trick when he met the enemy, remarking upon the weather and the crops in the most affable manner possible,—I learnt that a large number of transport-riders who had heard of the Boers' pranks up here would not come near the Biggarsberg, and others had taken a road round by Greytoun to reach Newcastle, considering it a safer though a worse road than *via* the Biggarsberg. Granting that the Greytoun road was in no worse a condition than the Biggarsberg route, as far as I am concerned, I prefer it should remain an undiscovered tract of country to me, because the road I was travelling on, full of spring-holes, ruts, and water-washes, and cut up in every direction by the traffic of wheels, was simply disgusting. One of the wise men of Natal recently made the remark that the sun was the best road-maker in this colony. It was the Colonial Engineer, who has charge of the roads, who said this, and every one agreed with him. A great deal of sun it would require to make that portion of the main road to Newcastle tolerable.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GROWTH OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

WHILE regiment after regiment was being pushed on to the border of Natal to fight the Boers, pressure was being brought to bear on the Government in England not to fight them, and I can't discover anything which was more calculated to make the right honourable gentleman at the head of the Ministry pause and reflect than the following words contained in a memorial presented to him by the Workmen's Peace Association :—

'It is with the deepest regret that the undersigned feel constrained to express adverse opinions in regard to the determination of the Government to suppress by force the independence of the people of the Transvaal. We do not forget the manifold difficulties which you inherited from your predecessors, but when there issued from the ballot boxes such an unmistakeable condemnation of their colonial and foreign policy, we did hope that those who succeeded to office would have given effect to the clearly expressed verdict of the nation. Your own record tended still further to strengthen our belief in the realisation of the views which you and many of your colleagues had led us to expect. So far as the war in Afghanistan is concerned, notwithstanding the tardiness of the withdrawal from Candahar, we are fain to believe that a just course is being pursued; nor are we inclined to hold your Government primarily responsible for the lamentable and iniquitous war in Basutoland, which, however, we trust you will use every effort to bring to an end. But in connection with the Transvaal, we are bitterly disappointed that the expectations we were led to cherish from the speeches of Liberal statesmen during the electoral campaign have not been realised. The annexation of the Transvaal was accomplished by means which we deeply deplore, and the course then pursued is now producing the results which such nefarious practices sooner or later invariably entail. That there are difficulties surrounding a satisfactory settlement of the question we do not deny, but these difficulties were well known before the general election, and were not then considered of such magnitude as to render a pacific solution impossible. The conduct of the Boers towards the native tribes may be unjustifiable, but is this a plea to be urged by us whose hands are red with the blood of Afghans and Zulus? To you, sir, belongs the credit of quickening the national conscience, of restoring our drooping faith in public men; and we earnestly entreat you to maintain the confidence with which your love of truth has inspired us, by allowing no false sentiment of national pride or prestige to deter you from acting towards the people of the Transvaal and their little Republic in any other spirit than you would display towards the great Republics of America or France; and that whatever powerful influence may be exercised, you will in office mete out to the people of the Transvaal that justice which you and your colleagues declared a necessity before you were recalled to power by the mandate of the people.'

Mark the words of the last line or two; here was a section of Englishmen throwing in the teeth of Mr. Gladstone the charge of infidelity to his promises,—an infidelity which had been one of the main circumstances that destroyed in the mind of the Boers the last vestige of their faith in the honesty of British statesmen. The shaft went home undoubtedly. If pressure was being brought to bear on the Liberal Ministry by Liberals at this time, there was pressure also from another direction,—that which the Free State as a people could use. The Volksraad had met and passed a certain resolution. It expressed 'sympathy' with its 'sister state,' and added that the Free State urgently gave warning of the 'fatal consequences' that must ensue from a continuance of the war 'carried on at present by the British forces against the Transvaal burghers.' The Raad was cautious in the language it used, but there could be no mistake left in the mind of any one who knew the feeling of the burghers of the Free State, that there was in that resolution a tone of veiled menace all through. Not even President Brand's influence could avail to restrain a demonstration of the popular desire to side openly with the Transvaal Boers much longer. Already over a thousand Free State volunteers were in arms against British authority at the Boer laagers, and fifty per cent. of the people of that state probably helping in other ways to keep the Boers in the positions they held. If the Free State once cast in its lot with the insurgents, half the Cape Colony Dutchmen would in all likelihood soon be rebels against British authority. It was a most dangerous moment for the power of England in South Africa.

That the Free State was not now giving more help to the Transvaal Boers than the Transvaal Boers expected, may be seen by reference to the circular below, which was sown broadcast, and published in a country ostensibly neutral and at peace with England:—

'TO OUR COMPANIONS AND FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN IN THE ORANGE FREE STATE.

'POTCHEFSTROM, *February* 19, 1881.

'WORTHY BRETHREN AND FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,—We take this opportunity of raising our voice of brotherhood, and to inform you that we are heartily thankful for the many proofs of sympathy evinced towards us in our present critical situation.

'It is known to you that we are at war with a mighty power, who has taken from us our liberty in an unjust manner, to violate our rights, and seek by force to humble and destroy us.

'Worthy brethren and fellow-countrymen! we are all of the same flesh and blood. We serve one and the same cause. We all strive for freedom and religion. You too are in a like imminent danger; our wellbeing is yours, and our freedom is your freedom! Therefore we come to you with the assurance that your assistance and relief will be received with a thankful heart. We do not ask for goods or money, but your person; your blood is our blood, which, through the usurper, is being innocently spilt for the recovery of our independence.

'Therefore, brethren and fellow-countrymen, we appeal to you! Come and help! Thus far the Lord has assisted us and blessed our arms, and Providence will further help us. Our enemy is preparing with a superior power of many thousand soldiers and cannon to destroy us, the rightful owners of the Transvaal. Our border is too extensive, considering that we have other enemies to resist. We therefore repeat—

COME AND HELP!

Again we thank you for the help and succour hitherto rendered to a poor and oppressed people, so much despised, and whose sacred rights are being unmercifully trodden upon.

'Consider our case. God rules and is with us. It is His will to unite us as a people; to a United South Africa, *free from British authority.* The future lightens for us. His will be done.—We remain, brethren and fellow-countrymen,

'C. J. Bodenstein, Sen.
'F. G. A. Wolmarans.
'N. M. S. Prinsloo.
'J. H. M. Kock.
'And 642 others.'

CHAPTER XV.

MOUNT PROSPECT CAMP REINFORCED—A MORNING CALL IN THE TRANSVAAL—SKIRMISHING.

BUT now to return to the scene of military operations. Arriving back at Newcastle on the night of the 21st, I found that Sir Evelyn Wood was to start for Pietermaritzburg at once 'to hurry up the reinforcements,' and Sir George Colley was to start on the morning of the 22d for Mount Prospect with the reinforcements Sir Evelyn Wood had brought as far as Newcastle. There was something peculiar in this arrangement,—the employment of the second in command of the forces in Natal to ride up and down a line of march, now secured by the establishment of garrisons at every point on the road which an enemy could take advantage of, merely to act as a guide and whip. When the Boers were at the Biggarsberg and the Ingogane, and both those natural strongholds were within their grasp, if they cared to fortify themselves there, one can understand the need for the presence of Sir Evelyn Wood with any advancing column; but when it was certain that there was not a Boer in the neighbourhood, and that we were occupying the road all along, what object could there be in sending Sir Evelyn Wood to Pietermaritzburg? At Newcastle, or even between there and the Biggarsberg, the only possible points to which the Boers might detail a force from Laing's Nek to operate, one could understand the desirability of having Sir Evelyn Wood as chief-in-command, whilst Sir George Colley, having reinforced his weak garrison at Mount Prospect, occupied the first post of honour. The idea that Sir Evelyn Wood's presence at Pietermaritzburg would accelerate by even five minutes the arrival at Newcastle of troops on the march between Durban and the Biggarsberg, is so supremely absurd that it is not worth a moment's consideration. From Newcastle, with the telegraph wire working to the Port and to every intermediate station or town, he could do all that it was in the power of a general to do in the way of hurrying up the reinforcements. I can't help coming to the conclusion, severely unjust as it may be, and perhaps totally erroneous, that Sir George Colley meant to take Laing's Nek single-handed. He had suffered two reverses at the hands of the untrained, undisciplined foe, and no doubt was piqued somewhat. If this conjecture is correct, I cannot see that it casts the slightest reflection on the head or heart of Sir George Colley. His generosity and splendid manly qualities were above suspicion; and I cannot see that it is inconsistent with either generosity or manliness for a general under the circumstances to adopt such a line of action. With abundant faith in the men he commanded, he thought, with the reinforcements he had, he could at a second attempt do what he had failed in once,—take Laing's Nek without the aid of Sir Evelyn Wood. At the same time, I am convinced that at this moment the seizure of the Majuba was no part of his scheme, and I will give my reasons later on for that belief.

Sir George Colley had an inspection parade of the brigade at Newcastle on the 21st February. He said: 'I am highly satisfied with the appearance of the troops, and feel it a great honour to have the command of such a fine body of men. I know that you, the three regiments present, have been lately engaged in Afghanistan; but remember you must not underrate the enemy you are now going against, as they shoot very straight, although not so well now as I believe they did formerly. You must remember also that your comrade soldiers who are now at the front, have upheld the name of British soldiers. I also hope that the war will soon come to an end, and allow the regiments now present to go home at an early date; and the reinforcements coming up will, I have no doubt, be a strong incentive to the Boers to settle matters as soon as possible.'

The fact that a convoy was to leave Newcastle at two A.M. on the 22d February, escorted by a strong force, was known at that place long enough before that hour for the Boers, had they felt disposed, to concentrate on the road at the Skheyns Hoogte, ready to try conclusions once more with the English—and Scotch, for the matter of that, as the Highlanders formed part of the escort. When I arrived at Fort Amiel (three A.M.), the last of the wagons was leaving, and it took me a good hour to head the long train. The column altogether from front to rear guard would cover a distance of at least two miles, although the wagons—some harnessed with mules, others with oxen—kept line well, without any great gaps between them. Fortunately the roads were in good order (good order for Natal roads), or the march to the Ingogo could not have been accomplished in the short time recorded. In front of the column a mounted patrol of the Hussars kept a sharp look-out for the enemy, and pleased indeed would the men have been had the Boers put in an appearance; as it is, Hussars, Highlanders, Naval Brigade, and Rifles feel they owe the Dutch an additional grudge for not paying them a visit on the 22d February.

At the Skheyns Hoogte, close to the stream which runs between the two mountains bearing that name, is the house of one De Wet. It was reported of him that on the 8th February he was seen round the Ingogo Heights, carrying something very much of the same shape as a gun; for this I cannot vouch. When the Hussars and Mounted Police, who formed the advance guard, arrived at Mr. De Wet's, they found the place deserted (save by some fat geese), and windows barricaded and doors fast. When I arrived at De Wet's, I found the geese had strayed as far as the saddles of the troopers, the peaches and mealies in the garden were being sampled —the former by our men, the latter by our Kaffirs and horses; the house doors were invitingly open to anybody who chose to walk in. Inside, the articles which had not been taken away by the rightful owners were lying about in confusion. In the kitchen were a few delicacies in the shape of butter, etc.; in the sitting-room a musical box on the table was playing 'Home, sweet Home.' I don't know what became of De Wet's property he left behind, but I have a suspicion—something more than a suspicion—that when he returned to Skheyns Hoogte he found many things down in his inventory—if he ever made out such a thing—not in his domicile. In fact, I ascertained later in the day that some wagon conductors with the column, who had been sufferers by the Boers looting and burning their private goods, set fire to De Wet's place. Immediately afterwards, De Wet put in a claim, and he has, I believe, since obtained solid compensation from the Imperial Government.

The sun rose above the horizon just as the advance guard rode down into the valley of the Skheyns Hoogte, and at the same moment rose the midges from their lairs. If any one wants to know what a midge is, and what a midge can do about breakfast time, and how many midges it is possible to get into a given space, I can commend to the inquirer a visit to the Skheyns Hoogte valley for perfect evidence on all these points, and guarantee him supreme misery whilst he is receiving it.

The Boers, had they made an attempt to stop the column, would have chosen the Skheyns Hoogte Pass, as it is really the only naturally strong position between the Ingogo River and Newcastle. That point passed, the journey was an easy and safe one. Abreast of the hill on which was fought the battle of the Ingogo Heights, the first halt was called, and the wagons were outspanned. Later on another trek was made to the river, a laager formed there, and the troops slept there that night. On the Mount Prospect side of the river, on the steep hill, several companies of the 3d-60th Rifles and two 9-pounders were in position to keep off any force of Boers which might attempt to interfere with the wagons when crossing the drift. Three miles farther on, Lieutenants Jopp and Boulton, with a company of the 58th, had entrenched themselves, ready to give a warm reception to any Boers who came along the road past the point now known as Jopp's Kop. It is hardly to be wondered, therefore, that the enemy kept close within his lines on the Nek.

On the morning of the 23d, at eight o'clock, His Excellency the General came into camp, and shortly following him came the 92d and part of the Hussars. Until three P.M. the wagons came trekking in. The Highlanders and the Hussars were posted on the hill on our right, close by the earthwork on which the mountain guns were; the Naval Brigade from the *Dido* pitched tents close by; the 2d-60th Rifles (who formed part of the escort) returned to Newcastle after we had crossed the Ingogo. At the Skheyns Hoogte a company of the Highlanders, subsequently relieved by Captain Whitton's detachment of the 21st Fusiliers, entrenched themselves to keep clear the line of communication.

We thought we were now settled down for a week's rest before Sir E. Wood, who was doing the 'hurrying up' business, would arrive at Newcastle with further reinforcements, and march round by the Wakkerstroom road to the rear of the Nek. Only a detachment of the Hussars remained at Mount Prospect; and later on the Mounted Squadron (all that was left of it) also went to Newcastle to refit; but we had a sufficient cavalry force for scouting and outpost duty. The vacancies on the General's staff were filled up, Colonel Stewart, 3d Dragoon Guards, being chief and military secretary; Major Fraser, deputy-assistant-quartermaster-general and intelligence officer; Captain MacGregor, 92d (brother to Captain MacGregor, late assistant military secretary), aide-de-camp.

Whilst we had been away the Boers had accomplished some small work. One night a tremendous fusillade was heard, and our men stood to arms. When daylight came, the cause of this waste of powder on the Boer side was discovered. Some horses belonging to Mr. O'Neill, a farmer living near the camp, had strayed up the road leading to the Nek, and the enemy had—probably expecting it was the British—kept up an incessant fire for some ten minutes on the unfortunate animals, inflicting a loss of three killed and wounded. This return is useful to a certain extent, as showing what damage the Boers might do in case a night attack had been made on the Nek.

Another incident of camp life was the shooting of one of our vedettes by Boers in ambush, a circumstance I have already referred to when speaking of the Imquela Mountain, on the left of our camp. The day following this affair, there was found at the spot where our vedettes were fired on a blue envelope, addressed to our 'Commandant.' It contained a letter to the General, asking him why he did not come and take the Nek, adding, 'We always thought the English were brave men, but now we think they are cowards.' This letter, with a reckless disregard for good ink and paper, was signed in large characters, 'A Dutchman,' as if any one but a Dutchman could be so bland and sarcastically simple.

Amongst other 'camp tales' current at this time was one that the Boers had been pegging down all round their camp in the long grass wires cut from the telegraph, over which they hoped our mounted men would trip. As an idea it was not a bad one, and probably it did not partake so much of romance as one that they had two carronades on the Nek, although this report came from high quarters.

On the morning of the 24th February, rising at two A.M., the General, accompanied by the two troops of Hussars—all that we had now in the camp—and the Mounted Infantry, made a reconnaissance of the enemy's position from the Transvaal. The movement, of course, was carried out very quietly, and nothing was known of it by those who remained in camp till six A.M. In trying to find my way to the nearest drift of the Buffalo, I found two guns had been placed in position to command the country in the Transvaal, over which any body of men marching from the Nek to our nearest drift must pass. It was with no little difficulty I found my way to a fordable drift—the one which the General had crossed. The ride would have been a pleasant one to any one in a less hurry than I was to get across, for the valley of the Buffalo River at this part presents magnificent views. The drift, when found, was not a very nice one at the time I speak of. After riding to the rear of the camp four miles to make the drift, I had to ride back on the other side of the stream in the Transvaal four miles to get abreast of the camp, and then two more to get near the point from which observations were being made. The view of the enemy's position, however, well repaid the labour. To our left we could, with the naked eye, see the result of the enemy's work during the last week. From the camp at Mount Prospect we had seen them busy with wagons and fatigue parties at some work to the left of their position, and it turned out that they had been fortifying the spot where the Mounted Squadron charged on the 28th January with such fatal results to themselves. The face of the hill on which the Boers were concealed on that occasion was, it must be borne in mind, concealed from our view at the camp, although it is a hill which forms no part of the ridge on which is the Nek, but is half a mile nearer our lines.

The Boers had evidently made up their minds that the point of attack last time would be the point of attack next time with us, and they had, so far as their judgment went, put it in a tolerably good state of defence. There were at least a dozen small tents, such as are used by an enemy for patrol purposes, and four or five tent wagons, at a point below the stony koppie where the Boers found shelter on the 28th January. The wagons were laagered, and the position further fortified by earthworks. As soon as the Boers discovered a strong body of our horsemen on the hill to which it was their custom to send mounted patrols at daybreak, and keep them there till sundown, they evidently anticipated an attack; and hundreds of the enemy could plainly be seen at daybreak galloping down to the koppie, which on this occasion it was only the General's intention to have a good look at. And a good look, and a long look, he did have, in spite of the warlike movements on the other side of the Buffalo. At any rate, His Excellency was on the hill-top from daylight till eight A.M. The Boers did not attempt to cut off our inquisitive party, at this time far out of range of our guns posted on the Natal side of the river. The Nek itself we could not see, owing to the intervening koppie, the immediate object of the reconnaissance. As soon as the Boers saw us withdrawing, they in turn withdrew the reinforcements they had sent down. Making a short cut for the camp, to avoid a six miles' ride back to the regular drift, we got safely across the river on the extreme right of our camp, but not without a few Hussars being ducked in the river, so rapid and deep was the stream at that point.

Later on in the morning we saw the enemy's scouts cautiously advancing to our observatory. To arrive at it they had to cross the Buffalo by a precipitous path in single file. They examined the whole of the ground on which we had stood, and kept circling and traversing it as though looking for something they had dropped there on the previous day. This went on for some time, and then two of our 9-pounders were quietly taken, under cover of a ridge, to the point where they had been stationed in the early morning. This movement was very nicely performed, but its object was frustrated, partly by the eagerness with which every one in camp ran to the summit of the very ridge which had concealed the movement of our guns to see the effect of the shells. Long before the guns even reached the position the Boers 'smelt a rat,' to use a homely phrase; and they immediately took to the nearest dongas, and worked their way up them till they gained a very respectable distance from possible danger by shells. Sheltering behind the koppie which we had occupied at daylight for our reconnaissance, they showed themselves now and again over the top very carefully; the gunners, however, had not come out for the fun of the thing, and in a few minutes' time after arriving at their ground, bang went a shell over the Buffalo River valley, and well up the side of the koppie presented to our view. The range of this shell was given at 3500 yards; 4000 was the next distance tried, and this time the missile went nearer the mark, but still short of it. A third was tried at 5000 yards; this proved a trifle short. The fourth, timed for the utmost limit to which the 9-pounders will carry, went 5500 yards, and, clearing the top of the koppie, burst on the slope where the Boers lay concealed from our view, with what effect of course no one on our side could tell. Another shot was fired in the same direction, which, we could see by the smoke, burst well over the koppie; the sixth, for some reason or other, fell short of its mark. The artillery, which had been partly manned by Naval Brigade men, then returned to camp. Shells are rather expensive missiles, and we could not afford to fire them when the result was unknown.

The only other excitement of the day was the arrival of two Dutchmen as prisoners, sent in from Skheyns Hoogte by Captains Napier and Menzies, who were in charge of two companies of the 92d at the post there. These Dutchmen were released later in the day: it may be concluded, therefore, that there was not sufficient evidence forthcoming to hang them.

There was about this date added to our force a corps of scouts, who, knowing the country well, and being able to talk Dutch (some of them could only talk Dutch), were expected to be of considerable service to us.

On the 25th one of these scouts brought in the information that parties of the enemy had been seen this side of the Buffalo, towards the drift at our right rear. Two companies of the 92d, and a Gatling gun, with some of the Naval Brigade, immediately started for the drift. They had a journey for nothing. It turned out that the Boers had not crossed the river; they had only been at their ordinary patrol stations on the other side of the river, perhaps a little nearer the drift than usual. There is a farm of one Horck close to the drift, and there they knew nothing of the Boers' reported appearance this side,—in fact, they thought it probable that two Kaffir boys mounted had deceived our scouts into the belief that they had reported at headquarters.

On the morning of the 26th reports again came in that a party of Boers were round at our right rear, at Van der Mewre's drift. This time a company of the Highlanders went out to endeavour to interview the enemy. Taking a route by which their movements could not be noticed from the Nek, our men gained a ridge overlooking the Buffalo drift and the house of Van der Mewre, which is on the Transvaal side of the river. Our Dutch scouts, coming up in great excitement, reported that the enemy was in force amongst the trees surrounding the house. Almost simultaneously, peering over the boulders, we saw a man at the house. The Highlanders crept forward on hands and knees, whilst some of their party were told off to take a circuitous route to surround the house, if possible. The Boers (there were only four) were, however, on the alert, and not to be caught napping. They discovered that we were covering the house from a distance of about 1500 yards with our rifles, and immediately made a run for it before the party despatched to cut off their retreat had gone many yards. A volley was fired at the Boers as they ran behind the house for their horses. Evidently some of the shots did not go very wide of the mark, because the Boers moved more cautiously. Behind the house they were safe from the fire of the Highlanders on the hill, but to avoid being cut off they had to make a run for it, as the scouts were galloping as hard as they could towards a drift higher up the river. After lying quiet a minute or two, the Dutchmen ran the gauntlet bravely, going one at a time, and escaped, although a bullet told on one of their horses. Not knowing that this might not be a ruse to draw our party into a trap,—the orchards and stone kraals at the house might have concealed two hundred men,—we approached the drift with caution, keeping a couple of files on the hill above, until we had forded the river, examined the place, and found it deserted. There were some geese on the flat near the house, but Major Fraser, who was in charge of the party, would not let the men even look in the direction of the flock. Some bullet moulds, anvils, and other tools were found in an outhouse, were confiscated, and the place then left as we found it, save that the doors were broken open.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIGHT ON THE MAJUBA—A FLIGHT FOR LIFE.

THAT afternoon (February 26) the weather was fine, the band played, and every one seemed in good spirits. The General and Colonel Stewart, I noticed, were taking a very long survey of the Nek through their field-glasses; in fact, from the attention they paid to it that afternoon, one would have thought that they had never seen it before. Colonel Stewart was so absorbed in the matter that he lay down on his back, with a pillow propping up his head, and gazed and gazed at the enemy's position until so much as he could see of it must have become indelibly stamped on his mind. He remarked that he was trying to discover whether the Boers had any guns there. Towards evening a Kaffir who came in was brought to the staff lines, and outside Colonel Stewart's tent Sir George Colley held a long conversation with him through an interpreter. The Kaffir once during his interview pointed at the Majuba Hill, and immediately the General motioned him to put his hand down. These trifling incidents had a significance, when after-events recalled them to my mind. The scheme for trying the hill at night was evidently being matured at that moment. The Kaffir was a servant on a farm close by, who knew every inch of the ground; he had been up on top of the hill on the previous night, and reported to the General that there was not a Boer posted there. This Kaffir was the executive officer of the intelligence department, and a reliable man he proved, as he showed us the way up that night.

No sooner had 'lights out' sounded at the usual hour, 8.30 P.M., than an order was passed round by word of mouth for detachments of the 58th, 3d-60th Rifles, Naval Brigade, and Highlanders, to parade, with three days' rations. No light was to be struck, and the utmost quietness was to be maintained. The destination of this force was kept a profound secret. Colonel Stewart gave notice to the correspondents, Cameron, Hay, and myself, the only ones in camp at the time, that if they wished to accompany the expedition they would have to take a servant each to hold their horses, as past a certain point every one would have to march on foot, and that was the only hint we had of the nature of the route. The camp at Mount Prospect had, after the Ingogo battle, been further fortified by the erection of additional earthworks. When the order came that the force was to form up by the redoubt nearest to the main road on our left, every one was convinced that we were going to make a night attack on the front of the Boer stronghold. In the lines of the several regiments which were to take part in this night march, there prevailed two sentiments: those who were going were in high glee, those who were to remain behind were bemoaning their 'hard lines.' The same spirit pervaded all ranks. When I found it was necessary to take a servant (and this information was only given at the last minute), I went to find the man who acted as groom for me—a private of the 58th—and told him what I wanted; in five minutes he was fully accoutred and ready to start, and pleased as a man could be at the opportunity of taking part in the expedition: poor fellow! when he returned it was on a stretcher. Private Jelly had been with his regiment up that hill on our right at Laing's Nek on the 28th January, and doubtless had heard the Ingogo affair criticised by his comrades; it was not incumbent on him to move from his quarters that night, but he volunteered with alacrity as soon as the chance offered of taking part in this the next movement of General Colley. I merely mention this incident about the groom as an illustration of the feeling of the private soldier: there was not, I believe, one in the camp whose confidence in their chief had abated one jot. So much for the spirit in which the force started.

Arrived under the redoubt, it was light enough to ascertain what force was to march. There were three companies of the 58th under Captain Morris, one of the 3d-60th Rifles under Captain Smith, three of the 92d under Major Hay, and sixty-four of the Naval Brigade under Commander Romilly,—554 rifles in all. The General was accompanied by Colonel Stewart, Major Fraser, and Captain MacGregor. Colonel Bond of the 58th, who had recently arrived at Mount Prospect from England, being senior, was left in charge of the camp, with Major Essex as staff officer, and Lieutenant Hamilton (brother-in-law to Sir George Colley). In all, our party numbered, with medical staff and Kaffir bearers, about 600. Entrenching tools were carried, and these, with ammunition, three days' rations, and accoutrements, greatcoats, and waterproof sheets, brought the load of the private soldier up to a very high figure, especially considering they had to climb 2500 feet that night.

It would be ten o'clock before a start was made; there was no moon, but the night was not very dark. The direction taken was across the main road and straight up the Imquela Mountain, on the true left of our standing camp. The General and staff rode in front; the 58th led, followed by the 60th, then the 92d, and the Naval Brigade in the rear. We reached a ledge on the mountain about half-way up (the spot where our vedettes were stationed in the daytime) without any incident worthy of note except the discomfiture of Mr. Hay, the *Daily News* correspondent. Whilst climbing the steepest part, the girths of his horse being slack, he and his saddle quietly slipped back over the tail of the animal without any one but himself noticing it at the moment. When we got on the plateau, then he was missed, and while a halt was called, Hay was sought after. He turned up shortly, *minus* his steed and hat, and had to 'foot it' the rest of the way, and no one envied him.

Arrived on this plateau of the Imquela, our course now lay at a right angle to the first line of march along a Kaffir path towards the Majuba. This path, wide enough only for one man or horse to walk in, had been worn on the side of the Imquela Mountain by the tramp of the Ethiopian for goodness knows how many centuries.

For the most part it is pretty level, though at places where a rivulet running down the side of the mountain has washed out a gorge, it descends rapidly to a safe crossing-place, and rises again to the ordinary level. For at least two-thirds of the way the path runs across the steepest part of the mountain, and here the slope of the ground is as great as earth knit with rock and covered with grass can make. Huge boulders, displaced from above, have embedded themselves in the most marvellous manner on the mountain-side, showing a twenty or thirty feet perpendicular face above the surface of the ground. By daylight they appear to you as if they would topple over with very little provocation. Neither these masses of rock, nor the precipitous sides of the extreme top of the hill, could we see during our march at night; a false step would have rolled a man down a couple of hundred feet incline, or until he lodged against a boulder or bush. This path, which leads out to a plateau at the northernmost end of the mountain, is about three-quarters of a mile long; between this point and the Majuba the broad ridge connecting the two mountains is comparatively level. After traversing this ridge we were therefore half-way up the Majuba, as we had already climbed half the Imquela to bring us to this level. Down at the foot of the ridge, on our right, lay the farm of O'Neill, and we could plainly hear the barking of dogs from that quarter.

Past O'Neill's farm (after diverging from the main road), and leading up over the ridge on which we stood, was a wagon track, but I doubt if anything more than an empty wagon could ever be dragged by oxen up that rise. Since it was customary for the Boer scouts to come down to O'Neill's at night, any attempt on our part to reach the Majuba except by the route we had taken, must have been a futile one, if we wished to conceal our movement from the enemy at the Nek. One rifle fired would have put their whole camp on the alert, and they, having a beaten track to the summit of the Majuba, would have reached it long before we could from our side. At the Imquela Mountain the two companies of the Rifles (numbering 140 men) were detached at one end of the ridge connecting the two hills; and at the other, or Majuba limit, a company of the 92d under Captain Robertson was posted, with orders to entrench. With this company every horse in the expedition was left. From the north a cold breeze was blowing, which made the place anything but a comfortable one whilst the halt was called to carry out these arrangements. The General wisely had brought a pair of leather slippers with him, and taking off his heavy boots he marched better shod for the climb in front of us than any other man there.

Thinking it would be false economy to go out on an expedition with three days' rations when we might be for four days dependent on what we carried, I had managed to get at least four days' supplies into my wallets. Potted meats in tins, sardines, biscuits, and a loaf of bread, pressed on me at the last moment by one of the servants, made up a pretty fair load, as I found out when I emptied the contents of my wallets into some capacious pockets sewn on the inside of a waterproof which, when walking, nearly reached to the ground. If we were cold on the flat, we soon got warm when the march was resumed, for now it was simply 'going up-stairs' all the way, and a very uneven and trying flight to mount; a horse would have refused the job altogether.

The General and staff led the way, being preceded only by the Kaffir guides. The strictest silence was observed in the ranks; had that order not been passed along, there would not have been much talking, because no one had more breath than was necessary to climb with. Every hundred yards, or less, a halt was made to catch breath; the signal for a rest was a low, short whistle, which might he taken for the sound a frog makes. Before we had accomplished half the journey, it became apparent that the men were severely tried. Those officers who had ridden as far as the ridge were, of course, comparatively fresh for the work; moreover, neither staff nor correspondents were encumbered with rifle, ammunition, picks or shovels, or blankets, as were the men behind us. The distance between the staff and the main body became greater each moment, and our halts more frequent, to let the leading company (58th) come up. Within 400 yards of the summit of the Majuba, the guides were for a time at a loss as to the way. There was only one spot at which we could gain the top; in all other places either perpendicular rock or kloofs full of slabs of granite, and impassable by reason of the thick growth of bush over them, barred the way. The way now taxed every effort of the strongest man. We had left the grass-covered slopes, and the march was over boulders, loose stones, and other obstacles, but always mounting higher and higher—the kind of place that one can imagine Longfellow's splendid ideal of a climber throwing down his banner, bearing a 'strange device,' at sight of, and turning his back on it, retracing his steps to the village below, which previously had no charms for him. 'Excelsior' was the order of that night with us; the Nek was to be the reward for the labour, so every one stoutly kept at the work without grumbling or stint of effort. When the Kaffirs discovered they had taken the wrong road, they tried back a piece, and got the correct bearings. This mistake of theirs, which was a very insignificant one, and did not delay the march more than ten minutes, was at the foot of a small sugarloaf hill, jutting, as it were, out of the side of the mountain close to its crest. Regaining the right path, we had about forty yards to ascend up a grassy slope; had there not been grass on it we must have given up the idea, the rise was so sharp. Crawling on hands and knees, and laying hold of the grass, we accomplished that portion of the way, and then we could, in the darkness, see the top of the hill. A file from the leading company of the 58th was now sent ahead to reconnoitre the summit of the Majuba, but the General and staff followed close on their heels, still climbing on hands and knees over the slabs of rocks, forming in wild confusion a sharp ridge at this the southernmost point of the Majuba. The night had become darker and darker ; on either hand all we could see was a precipice, of what depth none amongst the party knew except the Kaffir guides.

As we approached nearer and nearer the top, we should not have been surprised at any moment to receive a volley from the enemy. It seemed absurd to imagine that they would leave this mountain without a single sentry on it. The reconnoitring party returned with the information that there was no one to be seen on the hill. In another minute the General and staff were standing on what was the key of Laing's Nek, and the men behind came filing up in ones and twos as rapidly as they could climb ; but it was slow work, as the poor fellows, heavily laden with their accoutrements, provisions, ammunition, and arms, were well-nigh exhausted. The first thing we did was to lie down and rest for five minutes, then to take a survey of the ground. Looking down the hill on the left, I saw a red, flare light burning, evidently a signal to those in our camp that the position was in our hands. From the point at which it was shown, the Boers, of course, could not see it. The General stood at the point we had climbed up at, and as the men kept arriving, and throwing themselves down from exhaustion on the ground to rest, he personally directed them to move on to the crest of the hill beyond with an encouraging word. 'Get out to your posts, men, and then you will have plenty of time for rest.' No bullying or driving ever came from Sir George Colley, and none was necessary on this occasion, as the men readily went on to take up their posts. I reckon the time was about three o'clock when we arrived at the hill-top; for an hour and a half, at least, men kept straggling up. During all this time it was dark, and there was some little confusion, because many of the soldiers did not know where to find their companies, or even their regiment, in the darkness. The ranks naturally had been broken during the ascent, and some who could not travel as fast as others fell in the rear, and when they did arrive at the hill-top were at a loss in which direction to go. As day threatened to break soon, and the necessity of getting the men in position was urgent, the late-comers were ordered off to whatever points had not already a sufficient complement of defenders, irrespective of their regiments or companies.

The first thing the non-combatants did was to go and have a look down at the Boers' camp at the Nek. Very little could we see before four o'clock; a solitary light here and there in the darkness below us. In a very short time, however, the change was marvellous; the Boer army had risen from sleep, and in every tent and wagon there was a light; the valley, into which it seemed we could throw a stone from where we stood, was a mass of light. One glance sufficed to convey a fair idea of the force of the enemy there.

Looking away to the right or to the left flank stronghold of the Boers, which the Mounted Squadron on the 28th January had so bravely striven to take, the number of lights there showed that a force, little inferior to that behind the Nek itself, was congregated; whilst on our left, under the foot, as it seemed, of the mountain on which we stood, was the right flank Dutch camp, evidently containing some 100 covered wagons or tents. It was a thrilling sight from our point of vantage; there was our enemy *at our mercy*, and unaware of our proximity to them. At daylight we would see the artillery from Mount Prospect camp advance within range of the Nek, supported by the remainder of the 58th, the Highlanders, and the 3d-60th. We should see the guns begin to pound away; from the right side of our point of observation we should signal to the gunners where to direct their fire; the Hussars and Infantry would advance to the assault, and at the same moment part of our force would descend from the position we held, and our movement spread dismay and terror amongst the enemy, and there would then be a general stampede of the Boers. There was nothing else for it; they would be completely taken by surprise, and thoroughly discomfited; they dare not try to rush on our guns at their front, because we should then fall on their rear. Every available man would come out of the Mount Prospect camp to take part in the engagement at the front of the Nek. Our fatiguing night march had secured our camp; besides, was not the 2d-60th battalion of Rifles already perhaps at the Ingogo, and would it not arrive at Mount Prospect at daybreak? The centre of the enemy's position taken, their right and left flank positions would be doubled up in a few minutes by our artillery. The Boers were going to do nothing but run to-day; and I believe there were more than myself who pitied the miserable fate in store for them, to be accomplished in a few hours.

This was the programme for this Sabbath day; and as soon as the sun rose above the horizon, we should see the first incident and every detail of the fight, surprise, and rout. This was the train of thought on the Majuba Hill, and in giving expression to it every man spoke in a whisper; so near appeared the helpless foe to us that we dreaded to speak aloud lest in their tents they should hear our voices. What was the train of thought in the Boer camp at that moment? What were they doing with all those lights at this early hour?—cooking their breakfast? taking thought for the inner man? Had we been as close to them as we imagined we were, we would have heard the sound of many voices singing in praise of the God of the Boers and English alike, and in prayer going up for mercy and a happy issue to the cause of the arms of those who below us were kneeling.

'Why didn't we bring up the rocket tubes or the Gatlings: couldn't we pepper them now?' asked some. 'Don't be surprised if you see both rockets and Gatlings here by daylight. Now that we have landed, and the road is secure and known, they are on their way, you may depend upon that,' was the reply. With drag ropes and hard labour the Gatlings could have been brought up; carried by relays of Kaffirs, the rocket tubes certainly could have accompanied the column, and might have been on the Majuba now.

There was not much to see yet, except the enemy's position, as revealed by the light in their camps. Tired and sleepy, I got under the lee of a boulder, and tried to get a nap, but it was dreadfully cold; the raw morning air chilled every one, and at this high altitude there was a strong breeze, which rendered a mackintosh a very poor bedcover. It was impossible to sleep, but I kept attempting it for an hour or more, till the first tinge of grey dawn, and then curiosity as to the position we occupied and the surroundings overcame all drowsiness. The Nek was the first point for attention; the lights were still burning there, but gradually becoming paler and paler. There was a trench in front of the enemy's lines, extending right across the road and the entire ridge wherever it was approachable from the front, and these were all the earthworks to be seen. The main laager of wagons was pitched behind a rise at the back of the ridge, so as to be out of the way of shell fire from the front. Right and left of it, within 600 or 700 yards, were small clusters of tents, evidently the quarters of the outposts. Looking down from our position right into the enemy's lines, we seemed to hold them in the palm of our hands; with either the rockets or the Gatlings we could have broken up their camp, and killed them by the score, without moving a yard ourselves. Before the Boers could have got out of their wagons and tents, we could have slaughtered a quarter of their number with rockets—if we had had those weapons.

The Majuba hill-top in the centre was completely hollowed out like a basin; all we had to do was to line the rim or edges of it, if it ever came to the point of defending the mountain against a rush. Outside the crest of the hill the ground sloped down gently for some little distance, at places especially on the left overlooking the Boer right flank camp, and there the sides of the mountain were as steep as the part we had climbed up during the night. Gullies there were, washed down the hillside, overgrown with fern and undergrowth; here and there natural terraces and projections formed on the mountain-side interposed an obstacle to our view of the base of the hill below us. The idea of the enemy creeping from terrace to terrace, or up the gullies, and reaching the crest, occurred to no one. To do so the Boers must run the gauntlet of our fire at some point on such a journey; besides, they would be exposed to the concentrated cross fire of our men if they tried at any particular point to storm the mountain. Only on two sides could they attempt to carry our position by assault. The face of the Majuba towards Mount Prospect was impracticable; any concentration of the enemy on that side would also be exposed to the view of those in our camp, and the guns there soon be brought within range of them. The end or ridge of the Majuba, by which we had found our way up, was covered by the company of Highlanders left at the foot; only from the opposite extremity of the line, *i.e.* that facing the true left of the Boer lines, and from the direction of the Boer right flank camp, could the enemy come anywhere near our stronghold. Judging from the way in which some of the terraces on the two last-mentioned slopes abruptly terminated, we came to the conclusion that beyond these terraces there must be sheer precipices. In coming up the hill we had passed round the base of a small sugar-loafed hill rising out of the mountain-side; on the opposite face of the Majuba there was just such another conical hill, jutting up like a pinnacle above the level of the mountain summit. This offered a point of vantage for a party of our men, and was occupied; like a turret at the angle of a fort, it gave us the advantage of a cross fire on the avenues of approach. Roughly speaking, the Majuba hill-top, from brow to brow, as occupied by our men, is 400 yards long by 300 broad. The basin or dip on the summit occupies nearly the whole length, and is about 150 yards broad, lying in the eastern side or that nearer our camp at Mount Prospect. The edge or rim of this basin is a line of boulders all round, broken only in one or two places. When we had thrown up a redoubt on the highest edge of this basin, nothing in the world but starvation could drive us from it, even supposing our fighting line on the left was driven in. All the natural advantages of the hill were seen at a glance by any one walking round the position. Would that our men had known what the hill-sides were like! it might have turned the fortune of the day. Arriving on the summit in the dark, and being told off to their respective positions in the dark, the soldier only knew the formation of the ground in front of him. That the Boers could not scale the hill on our right was not known to the infantry defending the left slope; that a sheer precipice guarded our rear for a considerable extent was not known to those who all day long faced the right flank of the Boer camp on the Nek. Whether the ground all round was known or unknown, the Majuba hill-top was impregnable—under certain conditions.

Day would break about 4.30 A.M. at this time of the year. When I went at dawn to have a look at the Nek from the northernmost limit of the hill, there were at least twenty Highlanders standing up boldly on the ridge exposed to the full view of the Boers on the Nek below us. The foolhardiness of thus demonstrating our possession of the mountain could not be equalled under any circumstances. If our men had not shown themselves on the ridge, it would probably have been a couple of hours or more before the first Boer patrol came unsuspectingly up to our position, which by day they used as a look-out post. Had orders been issued for every man to lie close, we might have captured the first arrivals without a shot being fired. It would have been perhaps two hours later still before the Boers at the Nek discovered we were up there. All was quiet at the Nek; there was no sign of any stir or movement in the enemy's camp. The Highlanders stood watching, and pointing at the camp below them, shook their fists in exultation, and laughingly challenged the enemy, 'Come up here, you beggar!' The Boers could not hear the challenge, but, as subsequent events proved, they did 'come up here.' In a few seconds that camp at our feet changed from a quiet to an animated scene. In less time almost than it takes to tell it, the whole of the plain was dotted with horsemen in open order; they seemed to rise out of the camp and spread like a swarm of flies suddenly disturbed. Some galloped towards Coldstream away from our direction, and others rode, always in open order, towards their right and left flank camps; the ground below the mountain was dotted all over with them; none approached by the nearest line towards the Majuba. Still they covered the land; and were sufficiently near the one to the other to offer a splendid mark for artillery. Where were our rockets? 'Not arrived yet.' From our point of view it seemed as if consternation had seized the enemy, and they were preparing to evacuate their ground. We could see with the naked eye oxen brought up and attached to the wagons, tents struck, men hurrying and scurrying in all directions, apprehensive of remaining stationary lest a shell should come ploughing into their midst. Looking towards Mount Prospect, to see whereabouts our main force with the guns were, the eye travelled in vain over slope and ridge from below the Nek to our camp. There everything was quiet. It seemed incredible; the other party must be down in one of the numerous dips in the ground. After scanning this quarter for ten or fifteen minutes, and seeing no sign of the redcoats, there was no conclusion to come to except that they had been for some reason or other delayed in starting. Turning to the opposite brow of the Majuba, down in the valley below, the Boers were filing out of their right flank camp there, and skirmishing towards the base of our mountain, a long way yet out of rifle-shot. Round more again to our left or rear (reckoning our rear as the line of our march to reach the Majuba), the company of Highlanders left on the ridge at the base of the mountain were busy plying pickaxe and shovel, and had already raised a square earthwork a foot or more above the ground level.

Immediately within our own line of defence the men were putting up cover; but such cover! Each man cast about for a few loose stones, made a breastwork for himself on the ridge by piling them loosely one on the top of the other to a height sufficient to cover the head of the man who was going to trust to that for shelter, and of a width of say two feet. Anything more trumpery and miserable as a protection against a bullet could not be conceived. The pickaxe was only used to loosen a stone required for these pigmy ramparts when the strength of the soldiers failed to remove it from the earth in which it was embedded. The stones were piled one on top of the other, and the interstices between them seemed to occupy as great an area as the space actually covered. A bullet striking on the face of one of these ramparts would probably be more fatal to the man behind it than a bullet aimed at him direct if he had no such cover, because half the missile, after splitting up, would shatter through the crevices with deadly results to the man on the other side. In walking round the lines, before a shot was fired, and seeing the contentment of the men in building up such a structure as a defence against musketry, I remarked to several, 'What's the use of that? the splash between those stones will be worse for you than the bullet coming without obstruction.' That was my civilian idea of the thing. 'Oh, it's all right, sir; it's good enough for what we shall want up here,' was the nature of every reply I got. Three good solid sods, cut with a spade, and placed one above the other, with an aperture for sighting the enemy left in the centre, would, to my mind, have been worth a cubic yard of loose stones put together in the fashion the defensive works on the Majuba were made, and I hazarded the opinion frequently, with the diffidence which any ignoramus should feel when advising men skilled in the profession of arms. This I do know, that to have set the men to work in bodies of ten, with the pickaxe and shovel, to dig small shelter trenches, throwing the earth in front of it, and piling the sod on top, would not have entailed more labour individually for each man than that they were ordered to undertake, or elected to take, for their own protection. At points where the ground was too stony to make a trench a foot deep, stones might have been used to raise a shelter, but earth or sod ought to have been employed as a facing. It has been stated somewhere that '*the General* thought the troops were too exhausted for any systematic entrenchment.' Well, the General was all over the field, visiting every point constantly, and I cannot believe that Sir George Colley, seeing the men engaged in entrenching themselves without 'system,' would hold such an opinion for more than three seconds. If I were to give my impression candidly, I would say that every staff officer on the Majuba felt certain the Boers would never face the hill, entrenchments or no entrenchments on the summit, as long as the British soldier was there. If the soldiers voluntarily proved that at five o'clock they were equal to the task of creating shelter points in a disjointed, unsystematic way,—each man according to his own fancy or device,—then they proved that they were equal to doing some work under intelligent direction. Sir George Colley must only be credited with *part* of the blame,—if any blame attaches to any one for this initial error, supposing it was an error,—unless it was his habit to reprimand for insolence any member of his staff who ventured to make a suggestion based on the evidence of his senses. You may take it, I think, that Sir George Colley was not a man of that character; and blameable though he is—whilst his body lies in a soldier's grave—for certain matters which happened on February 27, 1881, he must not be made the scapegoat for the living, for no better reason than that the living survive to tell their story, and he is numbered with those whose answer is silence. 'The General thought': yes, the General did think, erroneously perhaps, but he was not the only thinking man on the Majuba that Sunday morning; and he was not the man to despise the thoughts and convictions of others. I know how idiotic and absurd it is in a civilian to give an opinion on any matter in which the report of a gun, and the speeding of a bullet from the muzzle of that gun, if it is directed at a human being, is concerned; but I will indulge in the idiotic tendency peculiar to a civilian in matters military to the extent of saying that, if any one member of Sir George Colley's staff had hinted at the desirability of systematic entrenchments being made, in the place of the unsystematic entrenchments on all sides, no such disaster as that which ever will be associated with the name of the Majuba Mountain of Natal would have been recorded.

That the Boers 'were entirely ignorant of our movements,' and that they only became aware of our presence on the hill when Lieutenant Lucy of the 58th, taking a rifle from one of his men, fired at a Boer scout at 5.30 A.M., is a mistake; one which Major Fraser, who that day proved himself to be a fearless and brave officer, fell into when drawing up his official report of the day's proceedings. However, I do not propose to criticise the official report, but rather to give a civilian's report of the engagement.

The Boers from east, north-east, and west, advanced rapidly towards the base of the mountain as soon as daylight showed them our men standing on the sky-line. To guard the rear and left rear of our position, the 58th men were at first posted; the left and left front were held by the Highlanders, as also our true front partially; the right front and right were in the hands of detachments of the 58th and Naval Brigade. In the basin or hollow of the hill-top were reserves of the 58th, Naval Brigade, and 92d. As soon as a well had been dug—water was reached at a depth of three feet in the hollow—these poor fellows fell asleep, or most of them did, fortifying themselves with what rest they could snatch against any contingency for which their services might be required.

The shot fired by Lieutenant Lucy was the first of the day, and Sir George Colley immediately sent word to 'stop that firing.' It was not returned for at least half an hour. Then the occasional firing of a rifle was heard in our fighting line, and from the Boers below us. Frequently the word was passed along our line to cease firing. I myself heard the General repeat it aloud more than once. But the Boers kept creeping up, after leaving their horses under cover; and whenever our men caught sight of a Boer, the temptation was too great to resist pulling trigger. There was, however, no fighting of any consequence until after six A.M.; then the Boers seemed to have got the range, and settled down to the work in earnest. From every available point they kept up a steady fire, which our men replied to with equal steadiness. For every shot discharged by our side, the Boers certainly gave us a dozen, but with very little effect. In the basin on the hill-top we were as safe from bullets as could be wished. Cutting the air in all directions above our heads, it was only now and then that a ricochet bullet, after striking the ridge, came buzzing through the grass unpleasantly near. I believe that some of the Boers had got their rifles fixed in rests, for while a party of us were having breakfast about nine o'clock, from one direction a bullet came ricochetting with undesirable regularity into the hollow.

All our men were cheerful and jolly; it never entered into the minds of any one on the hill-top that the slaughter was going to be so heavy, and our departure was to be made in haste within three or four hours. There had been a well dug in the basin, and water was found almost immediately, so we had something to dilute our gin with. The sun now shone out well, and made us feel comfortable once more. The men forming the reserve were discussing the events of the night march, and I heard one move the proposition, Would the Boers try to 'rush' our stronghold? The reply that came from several of the party was the significant one conveyed by tapping their bayonet scabbards. There seemed at this time, nine A.M., little probability of the enemy approaching to such close quarters as to give us any work with the bayonet; it looked rather as if they were going to keep up a game of long bowls. When night came on they might certainly creep up to within short range, and then, if at all, the bayonet would have to play its part in the fight. 'Any movement from camp?' was the question repeatedly put and answered in the negative, until those who could not go to the side of the hill overlooking Mount Prospect became tired of asking, and those who had nothing else to do became tired of gazing in that direction. There was positively nothing to see on any side. The Boers kept close cover; no one was wounded on the hill-top as yet; it might have been a first-stage competition in a minor event at Wimbledon, for all the excitement there was. Thinking this a good opportunity for a rest, I slept for a good hour after breakfast, and would have slept for much longer had not a sudden noise roused me. It was Lieutenant Lucy, who came to where the reserves were for reinforcements; nearly all the men here were asleep, and he had to make a good deal of noise to wake them up. 'Anything wrong?' 'No, nothing; only the fire is warming up in our direction, and we want more men,' was the reply. Certainly the fire of the Boers had warmed up, that was evident; but our men were answering in the same steady manner in which they had commenced. Ten men went off with Lieutenant Lucy to our left rear, and the next moment there was a call—the first during the day—for a doctor. One of the Highlanders was hit in the foot, a flesh wound only, and the brave fellow, refusing to be carried, came limping towards the spot in the hollow set apart for the surgeon's work. Drs. Landon and Mahon were the medical men with the party on the hill-top. In a few minutes more they had two patients instead of one to look after. Sir George Colley kept moving about round our lines; he never rested for more than a few minutes together, but there was no sign of excitement or trepidation about him. Everything he did was in his usual deliberate, quiet, cool manner, and that was his demeanour as long as he was alive that day, or at least up to the moment I saw him last. Every now and again he went to the brow overlooking Mount Prospect camp, where a flag signalman was stationed, and communicated with either the officer in command of the redoubt, occupied by a company of Highlanders on the ridge, or else with Colonel Bond at our standing camp. One of the messages flashed to Mount Prospect was, that a telegram should be despatched thence to Newcastle ordering the 3d-60th battalion of Rifles to march to our support.

Thinking it was time to begin some work, I set about writing a telegram, with the idea of sending it down to camp for transmission by the first opportunity that offered. It had been long since patent that we were going to spend a night on the mountain, so I had sent word by a Kaffir returning to the redoubt on the ridge below for my horse to be given up to him, as he intended after calling at the redoubt to go on to our standing camp. At 11.30 the fight was going on in the same monotonous way, and only four of our men had been hit, whilst several of the soldiers declared positively that they had killed or wounded four or five Boers. The General and staff, accompanied by Commander Romilly, then went to the edge of the basin nearest to our redoubt on the ridge below. The Highlanders were still busy with their entrenching tools. Standing exposed to view, one of the staff forming the group around the General noticed two Boers in a ravine below, within 600 yards or so, and called attention to them. The words were hardly spoken before Commander Romilly, with a sharp cry of pain, fell at the General's side, shot in the abdomen. This spread quite a gloom round our circle on the hill. Every one who knew Commander Romilly liked him. His quiet genial manners had made him a favourite with all; by his men he was idolized.

They brought him down into the dip near the wells (a second had been dug close to the first), and the news went round in a few minutes that his wound would in all probability prove a fatal one. When the General returned to the ground occupied by the staff when not perambulating the ridge, he was gloomy and silent; he knew the worth of Commander Romilly, and that the time of the brave sailor was short. It is stated that it was the intention of Sir George Colley to set some of the reserves at work throwing up an earthwork when this unfortunate event happened, but that afterwards, seeing how exposed that point was to the enemy's fire, he abandoned the idea. Exposed to the bullets of the enemy as that position was proved to be by Commander Romilly's misfortune, there was to the right of that spot high ground on the edge of the basin which the Boers could not reach with their rifles. This was on the side nearest Mount Prospect camp, and the face of the mountain behind was a sheer precipice of forty feet, with only bunches of heather growing out of the cliffs. A step or terrace, some twelve feet broad, and as many feet below the highest point of the ridge of the basin, offered a site here which might have been turned to advantage, if it was desirable to make an earthwork as a rallying point in case of emergency, or even for a redoubt to hold during the night. But the entrenching tools still lay idle, and so did the reserves. About half-past eleven I was on the left side of the basin, near the place where the General rested when he did rest, and with Cameron, who had forgotten to bring up any rations, had a light lunch of sardines and bread. That finished, he went to have a look round again, and I resumed writing. One of the 92d officers who was there was talking to me about the probabilities of the day. He understood that we should shortly see a diversion created in a certain direction, probably by a column under command of Sir Evelyn Wood. The direction he indicated was towards the rear of the Boer right flank camp. That would bring the assailing party between two fires, the fire of our men and the new-comers, and they would go down the slope of the Majuba faster than they came up. In the middle of the conversation he took from the socket which held it a glass eye or glass disc, which occupied the place of an eye, but could not do duty for it; held it in the palm of his hand, and from his water-bottle poured water over it to wash it. Whilst carefully replacing the eye in his head, there came of a sudden a terrific outburst of fire from the Boers, just on the other side of the slope of the basin on which we were at this time talking. There was something extraordinary in this, because the fire was in volleys, not in single shots, as had been going on all day; and from the sound we could tell the enemy delivering it were very much closer to the hill-top than ever any one expected or could have known. It was such a fire as had not been heard as yet, and from the way the bullets pinged on the boulders above our heads, it was evidently concentrated on one point. Our men facing it on the slopes outside the basin at this point had a particularly warm time of it, as there were not more than fifteen or sixteen Highlanders at that point. Immediately almost Colonel Stewart (I think it was) and two or three other officers came running from the direction of the left rear to where the reserves were lying right down in the basin, and ordered the greater portion of them to reinforce the Highlanders facing this unexpected fusillade. The reserves obeyed the order, but my impression at the time while looking on was, that there was a want of alacrity shown by the men which was not altogether reassuring. There was a good deal of shouting and ordering, 'Now will you step up quick there!' by the officers, which was not unnecessary to the occasion. The reserves, 58th, 92d, and Naval Brigade disappeared in skirmishing order over the ridge to meet the enemy, and returned the fire rapidly. That of the Boers from this point after a couple of minutes seemed to slacken, and I thought our men had driven them back. I had put my note-book, in which I was writing, in my waist-belt when this sudden attack developed. My field-glasses and case, clasp-knife (used as a sardine tin-opener at lunch), remains of a loaf of bread, riding whip, and other small articles were lying by my side, and I was about to gather them up. Before I could do so, the reserve body which had been taken over the ridge to reinforce the fighting line at the point threatened, came rushing straight over me, making for the ridge nearest Mount Prospect. To gain that they would have to traverse the basin or hollow down one side (from which they came), across the bottom, past the wells that had been dug, and up the rise forming the other side of the basin. I did not stop to collect my personal effects, as I thought the Boers must be chasing our men, and close up to the ridge of the basin, and I ran with the rest at a moment's notice into the bottom of the basin. On the left rear of this ridge over which our men came streaming at the double-quick in disorder (in fact, at a spot on the continuation of this ridge forming the edges of the basin), I knew there was a good complement of our men, and, after the first flush of surprise, made towards that point only forty yards distant.

Attention being called to this precipitate retreat, officers from every side who witnessed the affair shouted frantically, 'Rally on the right! rally on the right!' That call was in every one's mouth. The men in flight had their backs turned on the enemy; the 'right' of those retreating was therefore really the left of our fighting line, which was the principal line of the enemy's attack. The men responded to the call, and, making a half-turn when they reached the bottom of the basin, came back again to the ridge, but to a point to the left of that from which they had been so suddenly driven. They therefore in their retreat and rally had described a semicircle. Arriving at the rallying point, I saw at a glance that there were so many men here that those who a minute ago had been extended beyond the edges of the basin in front of this spot out to the brow of the hill, must have fallen back when their comrades on their right retired. The General and all his staff were here, Sir George Colley cool and collected as ever. Between us and the Boers there was good cover in the line of rocks which crowned the edge of the basin, and now formed a breastwork for our men. There was a lull in the fire of the enemy, as, breathless and excited, those who had been forced to leave the brow higher up wheeled round to the last standpoint on the Majuba Mountain.

Imperceptibly men from other parts of the mountain seemed to congregate here, where already was the greatest number, although now everything depended on each man sticking to his post. Cheerily the staff encouraged the soldiers to be cool, and so did every officer. Most of the men were still cool, but fierce determination was marked on every brow. That momentary retreat of the few had caused a bad effect. At this last standpoint the men were mixed up; a Highlander next to a 58th man, a sailor next to him. The line of cover offered by the rocks was not a large one; right and left of the clump were gaps covered with grass, only in continuation of the rim or edge of the basin. The men were no longer in extended order, but in one group—you could call it by no other name—four deep in some places, and sheltering behind the natural breastwork of stones, which from right to left would cover perhaps twenty yards.

Some kind of order of regiments and companies was being striven for when the lull in the Boer fire ceased, and as though taking fresh spirit from the momentary rest, they reopened with a fury that could not be excelled. Between the ridge of boulders behind which we sheltered and the enemy, there was thirty yards of flat (I am speaking from measurements I have since made), covered only with grass; then the ground sloped down. Lying on their faces on this slope, and peering across the space which separated us, the Boers kept up a terrific fire, aiming as low as they could at our line of defence without exposing themselves. That their shooting now was wild and comparatively ineffective, a subsequent examination of the face of our shelter amply proves. I think the great majority of the Boer bullets struck too low. The enemy must have simply laid their rifles on the edge of the flat ground in front of them, and, while keeping their heads low, pulled the trigger as fast as they could. At any rate, nothing was to be seen in front of our line but the upturned muzzles of rifles, as they were either trained to the mark or withdrawn for reloading. For five minutes a hail of lead rained, traversing the thirty yards separating the combatants. During this period the party of the enemy opposite us could not number less than 200, and evidently they, by rapidity of fire, hoped to hold us in check until from other sides their comrades should be able to come within sight of our present and newer point of defence. This intention they carried out effectually. As soon as the Boers turned their rifles on our last standpoint on the edge of the basin, of which I have latterly been speaking, the order was given in our lines, 'Fix bayonets,' and immediately the steel rang from the scabbard of every man, and flashed in the bright sunlight the next second on the muzzle of every rifle. 'That's right!' cheerily called Major Fraser. 'Now, men of the 92d, don't forget your bayonets!' he added, with marked emphasis on the word bayonets. It was the bayonet or nothing now, and the officer's words sent quite a pleasant thrill through all. Colonel Stewart immediately added, 'And the men of the 58th!' 'And the Naval Brigade!' sang out another officer, Captain MacGregor, I think. 'Show them the cold steel, men! that will check them,' continued Fraser, whilst volley after volley came pouring in, and volley after volley went in the direction of the enemy. But why this delay? The time we were at this point I cannot judge, except by personally recalling incidents in succession. When the bayonets rang into the rifle-sockets simultaneously with the reopening of the Boers' volleys, I felt convinced that in two minutes that murderous fire would be silenced, and our men driving the foe helter-skelter down hill. After the bayonets had been drawn and fixed, and remained fixed, our men still firing for at least four or five minutes, and no order came to 'charge,' I changed my opinion suddenly.

I was sitting by the side of Mr. Cameron on the ground, about a couple of yards behind the fighting group. 'There's going to be a disaster here,' I said to him. 'Oh, I don't know!' he replied; 'see, the men are standing well up to it with the bayonet.' 'Yes; but why doesn't the General let them go at it with the bayonet while the men have their blood up?' 'That will come in a minute. You'll see the 92d will make a magnificent charge in a second or two.' 'They may, but I didn't like that run just now on the right. I don't like this hesitation; it's ominous. See, our men are being knocked about now.' 'Not many; count those in the hospital.' The 'hospital' was twelve or fifteen paces in our rear, right in the bottom of the basin, and had, moreover, the shelter of a slight outcrop of stone. The Kaffir bearers were carrying men there fast.

One of the Kaffirs was shot right through the large muscle of the second joint of the arm. He was working, nevertheless, without any bandage round it, but his face had an expression of such acute pain that his features are stamped on my memory. Looking round to the hospital below us, to estimate the losses on our side up to this moment, we saw a 92d man come walking from the hospital back to the fighting line. His face and head were one mass of bandages. You could only see his eyes and nose. A minute or two previously we had seen him carried to the rear with his cheek mangled and his head covered with blood. 'What are you going to do?' we asked of him. 'I'm going to have another shot at the devils,' was his answer, and he did have another shot; more than one.

You had to shout to make yourself heard in the infernal din going on. Above the noise of the volleys of our men and the volleys of the Boers could be heard the voices of the officers, 'Now, my lads, wait till they show up; fire low, fire low! Now give it them!' The next minute after the volley, 'Cease firing there! cease firing! What are you aiming at? Be steady!' as random shots were sent in the direction where nothing of the foe but a row of muzzles against the grass could be seen. It might have been five or it might have been ten minutes that this went on before an order for our men to extend on the left was given, and an attempt made to enforce the order. Climbing up the mountain-sides, a fresh party of Boers on our left now threatened to take us in flank. To hold them in check, it was necessary for some of our force to deploy from behind the crest of sheltering boulders to meet them. The scene was one of wild excitement. 'Will you deploy there? Deploy!' was the call of the leaders. But in the face of such a fire any such order came too late. A small bush, twenty yards to the left of our shelter, was the point to which men were urged to go, on hands and knees, but they were reluctant; discipline was on the wane. In a group of men belonging to three different regiments the personal influence of officers was lost. There was no lack of leaders. Colonel Stewart and Major Fraser, seeing the hesitation of the men to follow the lead of the captains and lieutenants, themselves stepped boldly, sword in one hand and revolver in the other, on the way, and, facing the men, called 'Will you come on here, will you come on?' Who it was in particular held back I defy any one to say. I saw blue-jackets, red-coats, and brown-coats (Highlanders) moving in ones and twos on their faces to where they were called from; but an insufficient number were willing to obey the command. There was a hanging back, a reluctance of others, which neither entreaties nor threats could move. If there had been from the moment of the first rush, which I have already described, from the ridge an imperceptible ingathering of men from all parts of the crest towards that where this desperate stand was being made, the fact that men were leaving their posts at other points of the edge of the basin away from ours became momentarily obvious. From the face of the mountain overlooking the Nek (that is to say, from the extreme right of our present face), and from our right rear (points accessible to a determined enemy, the abandonment of which would expose our right and right rear to fire), men came in by ones and twos and threes rapidly to our clump. An officer stationed in the bottom of the basin to watch and prevent any such unauthorised reinforcement of our position, was powerless to arrest the thin stream of arrivals. 'Where are you going?' he would ask of one. 'Mr. So-and-so (mentioning the name of an officer of his regiment) ordered me to come here,' would be one reply. The next would be, 'I have been ordered to bring up ammunition, sir,' and so on. Whilst one party was being interrogated and told to go back, another would be slipping past unchallenged. Matters now were truly in a desperate state. Ever and anon anxious glances were cast by the men behind this crest of boulders to their rear, the face of the mountain overlooking Mount Prospect. Seeing the systematic desertion of other points of the field, and not knowing the nature of the ground in their rear, the defenders of the fighting line dreaded a sudden outburst of fire from a point which really, because of the natural formation of the mountain, was inaccessible to the enemy. Had every man been well acquainted with the various sides of the Majuba, the result of the day's work might have been different. A half-score of men in ones and twos brought ammunition from other parts of the rear edge of the basin to where we were; that was the excuse for their approach to our line, whilst everything depended on their holding their ground to satisfy those crowded together that there was no danger of a rear or right flank attack. Those who came with spare ammunition were ordered back peremptorily; some returned, some did not. All delivered what ammunition they brought whilst parleying with the officers who commanded them to return from whence they came. Packets and packets of ammunition were thrown up at the feet of

Cameron and myself, and over and over again we called out, 'Who wants ammunition?' and asked individual men in the fighting line, 'Do you want ammunition?' Every reply we got, and they were many, was, 'No; I have ten, or twenty, or thirty rounds' (as the case might be). With only one or two exceptions was any soldier really short.

Cameron, who had been out skirmishing with a rifle in hand in the direction towards which vain endeavours were being meanwhile made to induce the men to deploy, returned to the clump of stones. Hay, the *Daily News* correspondent, was in the basin, and taking a verbal message to the officer in command of the company on the ridge overlooking the Nek to keep his position at all hazards. 'Where is the General?' I asked of Cameron; at the moment I could not see him. 'There he is on the right. Lieutenant Hamilton of the 92d has just asked his permission to charge the Boers with the bayonet, but he replied, "Wait a while."' Evidently Sir George Colley allowed his feelings of humanity to stand in the way of the request of the young officer. We were forty yards at the farthest from the enemy's main attacking party. In traversing these forty yards our men would have been terribly mauled, no doubt, by the first volley, but the ground sloped gently to the edge of the terrace along which the enemy were lying, and the intervening space would be covered in twenty seconds—at all events, so rapidly by the survivors of the first volley, that the Boers, mostly armed with the Westley-Richards cap rifles, would not have had time to reload before our men were on them. I am not sure that the first rush of the infantry would not have demoralized the enemy, and that their volley would have been less destructive than some imagined. If only a score of our men had thrust home, the enemy must have been routed. At a close quarter conflict, what use would their empty rifles have been against the bayonets of men who would have the additional advantage of the higher ground? If a bayonet charge was impracticable at that moment, then, as an offensive weapon, the bayonet is a useless one, and the sooner it is discarded as unnecessary lumber to a soldier's equipment the better. It was our last chance now, though a desperate one, because these withering volleys were laying our men prostrate; slowly in comparison with the number of shots fired, but surely despite of our shelter. Some out of the hail of bullets found exposed victims. In a few seconds our left flank, now practically undefended, and perfectly open to the

Boers scaling the side of the mountain in that direction, would be attacked with the same fury as our front.

Looking to the spot Cameron had indicated as the one where the General stood, I saw His Excellency standing within ten paces directing some men to extend to the right. It was the last time I saw him alive. A sudden piercing cry of terror, which will ring in my ears for many a long day, rose from the line or group of infantry. We glanced round to our rear in dismay to ascertain the cause, imagining that some mishap had befallen the small party still left to guard the crest of the mountain there. Parties of men were moving rapidly in twos and threes towards our only line of retreat in the direction of Mount Prospect. Simultaneously the ranks of the defenders beside us ceased firing; three, four, five men turned and ran past us down into the hollow of the basin.

'What the devil are you doing? Come back, come back!' was heard above the din of the enemy's rifles. 'I'll shoot you if you don't return,' was the last intelligible thing I heard from an officer, who, with revolver cocked, pointed it at one of the runaways. Five, six, seven, eight more men broke from the ranks in front of us and fled. The rest wavered, and before Cameron and myself could rise to our feet, the whole lot went rushing wildly over us down into the bottom of the basin, making towards the track to the right (as they faced now) by which they had gained the summit of the hill during the night. There was another despairing cry heard, which chilled one's blood, as the men faced about and rushed helter-skelter for the next ridge. It was not long before I was on my feet and running with the rest. Right in our path was the hospital, and we had to go round it to avoid jumping over the bodies of the wounded. Racing side by side with a stalwart Highlander,—he was on my right, and had therefore the benefit of the curve in going round the hospital,—I grudged him the benefit at the moment, as shoulder to shoulder we ran. The thought was hardly out of my mind when the poor fellow threw up his arms and fell headlong, and a terrible volley from the stone ridge we had just left let us know that the Boers were there already. It told horribly on the fugitives, for I saw several in front and right and left of me stopped in their flight. After delivering this first volley the Boers kept up a terrible fire, and every moment their number increased as they swarmed up the hill, now on all sides except that we were running for. It was cruel work; our poor fellows dropped by the score. I had still to run up the sharp brow of the basin on the hill-top before I could get out of this murderous fire, and my long mackintosh, with inside pockets stuffed with tins of meat, etc., was a great encumbrance, as the loaded skirts of the garment swung about and dealt me knocks on the shins.

I thought of turning sharp round and remaining by the hospital, but it struck me it would fare ill for any one found on the top of the hill whilst the enemy's blood was up, whether surgeon or civilian, so I continued my headlong course, loosing off as I ran, and letting go my mackintosh, provisions and all. Going up the rise now was horrible work; the Boer rifles charged incessantly, and I could see the men still falling in every direction in front of me, mown down like grass. One Highlander, who was certainly not more than five yards from me, and directly in front, fell with an agonizing cry, 'O my God!' right across my path, and I had to jump over his body. On the right I saw one whom I thought was Cameron fall dead. The Boers behind us were taking a terrible revenge now.

It is singular how many thoughts flash across the brain of a man when he is expecting momentarily his death-blow. One of the most practical that entered my mind was, that the direction our men for the most part were taking, towards the spot at which we had arrived on the mountain, would lead them right into the line of fire of Boers stationed down the slope of the hill there. That the enemy was there in force I knew, so I directed my steps to that part of the edge of the basin on the other side of which I knew there was a precipice and bush in the kloof below. At all events, it was less likely that the enemy would be round so soon to stop the way at that point. The death-cries of the fugitives in every direction, the expectation of death every moment from one out of the shower of bullets coming from behind, made me redouble my efforts, but I never did more than hope to gain the ridge. Every man who came up out of the basin to the ridge at any point along the whole face of the mountain was almost certainly shot down, as he presented a fair mark on the sky-line, not more than fifty yards distant from the enemy's rifles. I gained the ridge, but was cowed at sight of the forty feet sheer drop in front of me. I hesitated, and for the moment wished I had taken the same route as most of our men. Up to my side came two men of the 58th, and they also halted at sight of the chasm. A bullet from our rear struck one of them to the ground, and, thinking it was as well to die of a broken neck as to be shot in the back, I sat down on the edge of the precipice, and dropped. Fortunately, there were growing out of the sides tufts of a kind of heather, and, clutching frantically at these in my descent, I managed to land on my feet unhurt. I was hardly better off now than before, for the bush was very thin, and the ravine full of immense boulders, some lying flat, others tilted up on end, but everywhere monkey rope and undergrowth blocked the way. The uninjured 58th man who had been left on the ridge of the basin above, had followed my lead down the precipice, and as he got down safely he called out to warn me I would never get through the way I was going. He himself struck off to the left of the ravine, to gain a slope which was only grass-covered. I sang out to him to keep to the right, and make for the bush, as he would not have a chance of life in the open in a few minutes. Already the Boers, seeing no attempt to rally was made, were in pursuit of our men, and had gained the face of the mountain looking down on our line of flight below. If their fire had been terrible before, it was equally so now. They poured continuous volleys into the ravine down which I was trying to make my way; their bullets pinged on the stones all round. Scrambling sometimes on hands and knees, tumbling and slipping at every other step, now tripped up by my feet catching in those confounded and confused monkey ropes, now coming to a dense mass of undergrowth which barred the way, I had not travelled many yards before I felt thoroughly exhausted; and, indifferent to bullets or anything else, I halted and gave myself up for lost. One of these showers of whistling missiles must sooner or later strike me; they could not keep impinging on the rocks, within a foot or less of my body, every second much longer. I lay on my back in the place where I had last fallen, and after a minute or two, with the renewed energy which despair brings, I rose and forced my way on again, always tumbling and falling, and being impeded by some obstacle or another. It was useless, however, and, panting for breath and thoroughly knocked up, I had to halt again.

The fierce sun poured down on my head (my helmet had gone long ago), and increased my misery. I felt certain that I could not be hit now, or I should have been knocked over long since; so I again lay still, whilst strange thoughts came and went in rapid succession. For a second time, however, I made an attempt to get out of the fire. The ringing sound of the bullets on the stones was a wonderful incentive to renewed exertion; besides, some little way forward I saw the bush was dense, and offered cover from the enemy's sight. Twenty yards more and I saw a slab of rock lying flat, the ends supported by being lodged on boulder points. Under this slab there was a cavity large enough to hold three men in a crouching position. No bullet coming from the hill above could strike any one under that massive shelter, so I halted here, and took refuge under its friendly cover.

Barring a ricochet, or the Boers continuing the pursuit down this ravine, I was safe for the present. When night came, I might manage to sneak through down the mountain, and gain our camp. Meanwhile, the enemy's fire continued without intermission, and I could hear that it was on all sides. I speculated that it was possible some of our men would, on reaching the lower ledges of the mountain, face round and do their best to check the pursuit after us. I didn't hope much from that theory; the rout had been too complete, the panic too great, for a rally to be expected. Our losses must be so heavy by this time that the survivors could accomplish nothing. From the company of Highlanders on the laager far down the mountain only could present help come. Then I thought the guns from our camp at Mount Prospect would be sent out with a strong force to within range of the Majuba as soon as our disaster was noticed. If our artillery opened from comparatively close quarters, I would after all perhaps be able to make the camp by daylight. To go down out of the bush now into the exposed slopes would be certain death, and I knew I was not far from the point where the bush and ravine terminated. The fire of the enemy from above now slackened a little; it was more of a desultory character. Every now and again it would break out in volleys, no doubt when the Boers caught sight of some poor fellow rising from the ground and attempting to run. Gradually it slackened further, and now there were only occasional shots. I could hear the voices of the Boers; sometimes an exulting shout, sometimes a sudden exclamation, followed by the discharge of a dozen rifles as they got view of a straggler. Then what undoubtedly was an angry discussion between two of their number, then a shot fired. It occurred to me that one Boer had been remonstrating with another for shooting a helpless man. That was only a conjecture on my part. It was strengthened by the occasional report of firearms; surely they were giving no quarter; all our men must be *hors de combat*, and at their mercy now. I looked out cautiously from my hiding-place. Projecting from behind a boulder in front of me I could see a man's boot; stretching out farther, I saw part of a leg. Not a groan or a sound from him; he must be dead. The right-hand side of the ravine was very steep, almost precipitous, and densely covered with trees. From that direction I heard voices; evidently the enemy were sending men down to examine the bush. There was little hope for me if that was the case. More shots now and again; they could not be showing any mercy. This, then, was a cold-blooded massacre, and I would be a victim shortly. I thought I would at least have the satisfaction of a shot at any one who peered into my hiding-place, so I placed two or three loose stones at the entrance and held my revolver ready. How long elapsed I would not like to say. Looking back to moments spent under such conditions, they seem long ones; they seemed long at the time, perhaps longer than they really were. I had been at all events long enough under the rock to become quite refreshed and cool in the body. The firing having all but ceased, and I hearing what sounded like the voice of a good-natured man, another idea occurred to me: to go out, make my way towards him, and ask to see the Boer Commander. To further this plan, I first took a slip out of my note-book, addressed a few lines in it, and folded it as a letter to Joubert. My note-book, fortunately thrust in a pocket of a broad waist-belt, had stayed by me, although all the money I had in the same pocket had rolled out when coming down the ravine. I had been, so to speak, with heels in the air. The last words I had written on the top of the hill were: 'The Boers can never take this hill.' I thought it would 'look better' to be found unarmed, even with a 'six-shooter'; so I covered that weapon carefully up with sand, in the bed of my hiding-place. Having a mind to retain, if possible, my watch and chain, I loosened them and stowed them in the breeches pocket; the Boers might not insist on searching there. They would be certain to make me hand over my boots to them, and they would therefore be an unsafe hiding-place for a watch and chain. The economical impulse once started spread, and I thought I might as well take off my spurs. These I thrust in an inside breast-pocket. Having made these preparations for all the available property I had about me, I came out of my hiding-place, and, hearing still the same good-natured voice some way up the bush on the side of the ravine, I sang out, 'Halloo there!' 'Coom up 'ere; I weel not shut you,' was the reply. And I readily accepted the invitation, feeling sure that he would keep his promise. He seemed in a great hurry, for he kept calling, 'Coom on, coom on; I weel not shut you.' I was only too anxious to reach him before some Dutchman less suave than he, catching sight of me, should let drive in my direction. The climb was a difficult one; but, swinging up by the aid of trees, I reached him. I found my friend very fat, and very much overloaded with rifles, bayonets, and cartridge-pouches stuffed full. His waistcoat had strips of leather sewn all over it from the bottom button to the throat; these clips were filled with cartridges; the man was a moving armoury in himself. When first he caught a glimpse of me through the foliage, he ordered me to halt, and inquired whether I had a 'skit' or weapon. 'No; I have no arms. I'm not a *rooi boatch.*' *Reminscrab mut courant*,' I had previously heard, was in the Boer language 'newspaper writer.' It was all the Dutch I knew or thought I knew, but it did not help my captor to understand my position. He was nevertheless as genial as one could wish, called me his 'poor fellow,' and took me by the hand as if we had been sworn friends; I was perfectly prepared to reciprocate. No doubt I cut a sorry figure, and excited his pity, as hatless, clothes and hands torn, face begrimed, I made his acquaintance.

While we were talking, or trying to converse, an Englishman's voice from the direction I had just come from, called out, then another and another. My captor, who had informed me that he was a veldt cornet (an official), became rather alarmed, and asked if these hidden men would fire. The hidden men were equally alarmed as to the intentions of the veldt cornet, and asked, 'You won't shoot us, will you?' I told them to come out of their cover up to where we were, bringing their arms reversed, to reassure my friend. The poor fellows were only too glad to surrender, and receive quarter. They, just as I did at first, thought every man found was promptly shot; besides, two of them were Highlanders, who, coming from Afghanistan, had seen something of the no-quarter principle. As they approached they still seemed diffident, as they repeated, 'You are sure he won't shoot us, sir?' When they got to where we were, on a ridge in the bush above them, they were profuse in their expressions of admiration of the Boers. There were, besides the two Highlanders, a 58th man, and an Army Hospital Corps man. My friend the veldt cornet took their arms; he was an old fellow, fully fifty-five years of age, short and stout, with shaggy beard, whiskers, and eyebrows, which gave his face the appearance of that of a Newfoundland dog. Whilst we were talking, I heard another voice calling me by name to our right, and, going in the direction, found it was Lieutenant Hill of the 58th, the gallant young officer who had so coolly carried two men from out of fire at the Laing's Nek fight. He was sitting on a boulder, holding his arm, which was cut from the wrist up to the elbow. His face told he was in horrid pain; but, cool and collected, he uttered no word of complaint or murmur. After commiserating with him, I returned to the veldt cornet and his prisoners; and he promised to send down help to the officer, and allowed the Army Hospital Corps man, who had some bandages about him, to go and attend, as best he could, to the mangled limb of the lieutenant. Then we went to the hill-top, as I said I wanted to see the Commander; but my guide puffed and blew to such an extent that I offered to carry some of his load, as I was quite fresh for work after my rest under the cool stone. He accepted my offer, and I helped the old man up difficult places, passing him the butt-end of a rifle to lay hold of, and established further friendly relations between us. On our way up he called out to a certain Hans on the summit to come and carry some of his arms. 'Hans,' he informed me, was his grandson.

On the hill-top once more, I found myself surrounded by Boers. There were lads there not more than fifteen, and old men of fifty or more, all armed to the teeth; every one with more rifles, bayonets, and ammunition that he could possibly carry far. I was introduced to the Commandant Smidt. He is a man of middle height, broad shoulders, and powerfully made; black beard and side whiskers, grizzled in places; age about forty-five, I should think. His countenance conveyed the idea of shrewdness; a man who thinks twice before speaking once, and when he does speak, speaks to the point. He looked at me with a certain amount of suspicion, sent for his interpreter, and examined me on the spot. He was standing in the centre of a group of the older men, at the point of the Majuba where we had first gained its summit that morning, and where our men had rushed to make their descent that afternoon. Far down below was the laager or redoubt, still held by the company of Highlanders left there to keep open our line of communication. At Mount Prospect camp in the distance no stir could be seen with the naked eye. 'What do you want?' was

Smidt's first question. 'To go back to our camp.' 'What for?' 'Well, I am a correspondent, and want to send an account of this affair away by telegraph. I'll promise not to divulge anything that I have seen here which would be detrimental to your position.' 'There have been five correspondents here to me already,' replied the fighting general; and my hope of freedom ebbed very low immediately. I answered by showing my pass, signed by poor Captain MacGregor. 'Who is Captain MacGregor?' was his next question, after examining it. 'Sir George Colley's military secretary; you killed him at the Ingogo.' 'How do you know?' 'I was there,' I replied; and, to satisfy his mind on that point, indicated where Captain MacGregor had lost his life. 'And was that your account in the paper?' 'Yes.' 'Then you made one mistake in saying there were 1000 Boers there.' 'Well, General, I couldn't come and get precise information from you, you know, at the time.' He seemed satisfied, and, taking a leaf I offered him from my notebook, he wrote a pass. Seeing some writing on other pages of the book, he asked sharply, 'What is that?' 'That's the message I want to send.' 'I had better see it.' 'Yes, certainly.' And his interpreter began to read. 'Well, will you promise to send me some copies of the paper with it in?' interposed the Commandant. 'Yes; but how am I going to send them?' 'Come up to the Nek with them.' A singular order, certainly, but one that I was rather glad to receive, as the necessity for redeeming my *parole d'honneur* might give me a chance of seeing the Boer leaders. Whilst this conversation had been going on, some of the old men there who could speak English asked me several times, 'Now do you English say we are cowards?'

I told them I had quite changed my opinion of their manner of fighting. I thought they would never fight except under cover, and never charge our men if our men were under cover. From their conduct that day, and from the manner in which I saw they were treating our wounded, I admired them as brave men. And this is my opinion:—Amongst the Boers, as amongst every other nation in the world, there are cruel men, who would not hesitate to commit any atrocity. Amongst Englishmen and English soldiers there are such men; but I say that, take man for man, I would as soon fall into the hands of the Boers as into the hands of English soldiers, were I their enemy and of a different nationality, under circumstances such as those of February 27, 1881, on the Majuba.

All around on that hill-top I never heard a single offensive expression; the demeanour of every man was quiet and gentle. One man offered me a drink out of his pannikin the moment I asked for one on getting to where Smidt was. Seeing me shelter my head from the sun with my hands, when I asked permission to pick up a helmet, they replied, 'As many as you like,' and handed me one. There was no boasting, or bragging, or exultation at their victory.

I was just on the point of starting down the mountain with a guard back for camp, when one of the Boers asked, 'Where is Mr. Wood?' meaning General Wood. 'That's not altogether a fair question,' I replied; 'I have promised you I will not divulge anything I may learn of your strength or circumstances up here; and, on the other hand, you must not expect me to give you information about the English. Besides, I could not answer your question, for the very good reason that I don't know where General Wood is.' My interrogator immediately apologized for putting the query, and said he had done so thoughtlessly. Another (it was Christine Joubert, I believe) asked, pointing to our laager below the mountain, 'Have they two guns there?' I confess I felt justified in misleading him by replying 'Yes.' To have discovered to them the weakness of the company of Highlanders there might have been prejudicial to them. The Highlanders had two 'guns,' and many more, but not big guns, if that is what Joubert meant. His next remark was, 'I am going with 500 men to take them.' 'All right; but you have been so good to me I should be sorry to see more of you shot.' I had evidently made an error in encouraging their mistaken notion. They would fight for possession of those 'guns' to the last.

Remarking that the Boers must have killed a great number of our men this day, one of them asked me who was the officer they had killed; wasn't it Mr. Wood? Immediately I thought of poor Commander Romilly, but said I could not tell unless I saw him. Then they asked, 'Do you know Mr. Colley?' I replied, 'I know General Colley, the Governor of Natal and the Transvaal.' 'Yes, the Governor; are you certain you know him?' The suspicion then for the first time dawned upon my mind that Sir George Colley had come to his death, because my description of Commander Romilly, and their negatives, proved to me it was not one of the Naval Brigade they were inquiring about. Anxious to satisfy myself, I said if they would show me the officer I would tell them who he was. Walking back with Smidt and his staff to the place our men had fought at and fled from, there indeed lay our brave General. Though his face was covered with a helmet, I knew at once it was he; to assure myself, I lifted up the helmet, and saw the features as calm and peaceful as if in the repose of sleep instead of death. The fatal wound was at the back of the head. 'Is it the General?' the Boers asked eagerly. 'Yes, it is.' 'Have you ever spoken to him? Are you sure, quite sure?' a dozen asked, as they pressed round the corpse. There was a lump rising in my throat, and, not feeling disposed to speak much, I turned to Smidt and said, 'I have told you it is he; if you cannot take my word as a gentleman, I will swear it if you like.' 'Yes, swear it,' replied some; and to get rid of their importunity, I did so with the right hand aloft, although Smidt interposed, 'No, that is sufficient'; and, seeing I was moved, put no more questions. I told them, 'You have killed the bravest gentleman on the field to-day.' 'Yes, he fought well,' several promptly replied. One man said, 'He was a very nice gentleman; he dined in my house when he went to Pretoria.' Another said, 'He did not think we were wrong, but he was a soldier, and he must obey orders.' Others remarked, 'It was no use fighting against men who had right on their side.'

I bethought me of getting away at once to camp with this sad news, but afterwards turning, told Smidt, 'I am going to our camp; if I say that General Colley is dead, I shall hardly be believed. Let me take some token from his body as a proof.' Having obtained this permission, I examined the pockets of the gallant Commander, but everything was gone, and I noticed now that the buttons of his coat had been cut away. I said to Smidt, 'You see your men have taken everything; even the buttons off his coat.' The boots of the General had been taken off; the helmet that covered his face was not one that belonged to him. Had I even been able to find the pugaree of peculiar pattern which His Excellency wore, that would have been perhaps sufficient. Under his head was a white silk handkerchief, and that might have his initials on it. 'As there is nothing else, by your leave, Commandant, I will take this handkerchief; it will convince.' Smidt assented, and I drew it away from under the poor mangled head, as I thought probably it would be known to Major Essex, or perhaps the General's servant, by its peculiarity of fabric. I then told General Smidt I was sure if he would see that the General's body was protected from interference by any of the men, the best thanks of the English would be given him. He replied, 'Certainly,' and that I had better get some of the soldiers to cover the body up. Calling out, 'Will any one here give a greatcoat to cover the body of our General?' a Highlander stepped forward and said, 'I have my arm broken, but I will do my best, sir;' and then a 58th man volunteered his services also. One of them gave his greatcoat, and we placed it over the body of one whom the Boers were forced to admit was a brave gentleman.

The spot where the General lay was to the left of the place where the last stand was made, some thirty yards away from the hospital; and close to him there was not another man dead. In other parts of the field they dotted the ground. Unless the Boers carried his body away from the place where he was shot, Sir George Colley must have stood alone. I believe, from the nature of the wound, that when moving away from the ridge over which the Boers were coming, a bullet fired at his side-face killed him instantly. That he was not more than ten or twelve yards away from the enemy is unquestionable; that he was the last man to move away from the fighting line, is also beyond question. With him remained Captain the Honourable C. Maude, who met his death close by, facing the enemy.

Subsequent accounts proved that Sir Geo. Colley held his handkerchief aloft as a sign of surrender. There is also a story, circulated by a Boer who was forced into the enemy's ranks, and formed one of the storming party at the Majuba, that the Boers saw a white flag, and one of their number called out to cease firing. Another Dutchman called out, 'Shoot the white flag and the man who said that.' This statement has been made on oath, but I cannot say what the value of it is.

Turning from the spot where the General lay, I took a hasty glance round the hospital to see who was dead, and who still living. Dr. Mahon of the Naval Brigade was the only medical officer surviving, and he was hard at work with one or two Army Hospital Corps men, and aided by those of our men who, wounded, were not incapacitated from lending a hand. Dr. Mahon was not 'mentioned' in despatches, nor in any report about this affair. He was the only officer who could have really been an eye-witness of the General's death, an officer who stuck to his post whilst nearly every one else ran for dear life, an officer who was at work on the Majuba for forty-eight hours consecutively after the fight.

Speaking of reports and despatches reminds me of what must be a misprint in Major Fraser's report upon the affair. The words in the Blue Book (c. 2866) of April 1881 are:—

'I venture to submit that the causes that led to our failure were the following, as regards the fight:—

'(1.) The slopes below the brow of the plateau were too steep to be searched by our fire, and cover existed up to the brow.

'(2.) The rocky ridge we occupied in second line, though the best we had time to hold, did not cover more than fifty yards to its front, as the plateau rolled continuously to the brow.

'(2*a*.) The men were too exhausted to entrench and hardly fit to fight.

'(3.) When the Boers gained the last ridge, ours had to descend almost impassable slopes, and many were shot in doing so.'

The misprint, if it is one, must be that of adding the paragraph marked (3) to the list of 'causes that led to failure.' When the Boers gained the last ridge, our men were already in full flight. The descent of impassable slopes, of course, was one of the causes of the many men shot on our side, but certainly not one of the causes that led to 'failure as regards the fight.'

But to return to the sad battlefield, where Dr. Mahon was busy with his humane work, the first object that drew my attention was the stretcher on which poor Commander Romilly had been carried to the hospital. The temporary awning which had been fixed up to shelter the wounded officer from the scorching sun was gone, but one of the Naval Brigade men was standing at the foot of the stretcher. In reply to my question whether his chief was still alive, he said, 'No, sir, he is dead; they have tumbled everything over, and shot him twice since.' Close by was a body covered with a waterproof sheet, and a 58th man keeping watch over it. This was poor Captain Maude. The heir to an estate, and leaving a wife and two children, he came to Mount Prospect a fortnight before the fight, and was attached to the 58th by request. He was formerly in the first battalion of Grenadier Guards, and came out to South Africa just to see the country. Whilst at the Cape, hearing of the disaster at Laing's Nek, he came on in post haste to offer his help. With every one at Mount Prospect he soon became immensely popular, because of his genial manners and disposition. On the battlefield when the fire was hottest he was ever the same, and though this was the first time he was under fire, he directed his men in the coolest manner. In every way he was a splendid example of an English gentleman. It was only a few hours since he had been one of the group amongst which I had taken breakfast, and in conversation mentioned how glad he was to have come up the Majuba, as before he had not been under fire, and wanted to see what it was like. I could scarcely believe he was dead. Lifting the shroud, one glance was sufficient to bring conviction. A bullet hole in the centre of his chest told the tale too well. Captain Maude is the only officer whose body sleeps on the top of the Majuba.

Dr. Mahon said he was in great need of surgical appliances and help, and was anxious to have word taken to the camp. It was not any time for asking questions; besides, the Boers were a little jealous of the men they had taken prisoners. All prisoners had been, of course, disarmed. They would not let Dr. Mahon go near where the body of the General lay, even before they knew it was Sir George Colley; but they were kind and considerate to all our wounded, though there were not wanting instances in which some of our poor fellows, irritated by their cruel wounds, cursed the enemy to their face freely. One man in particular signalized himself by his conduct in this matter; whenever a Boer came near where he lay, he warned him off, threatening to throw a meat tin at him. As some of his comrades said when they came back to camp on stretchers, 'Bill "loosed off" terrible at them. We thought every minute they would shoot him.' No doubt "Bill" was fortunate in getting back to Mount Prospect two days after the fight with his comrades who had been wounded.

Hurrying away from the scene of the conflict, with a Boer who could speak English as well as I could, and who promised to escort me through the lines, who should we meet but Mr. Cameron of the *Standard*. His appearance to me was like that of a man rising from the grave, and we shook hands warmly on the strength of escaping. He was under the charge of a Boer, and was anxious to see the Dutch General, to get a pass for Mount Prospect, so I waited for him. There seemed some hesitation, and, returning to where Smidt was, I ascertained that the appearance of yet another correspondent (this was the eighth applicant, although only three had been on the hill) was one too many for Smidt. No, he wouldn't give another pass, unless he was satisfied as to the identity of the applicant. Cameron unfortunately had neither a card nor a line in writing to show cause why he should be on that mountain in any other capacity than that of a combatant. I offered to vouch for him, but that seemed of no avail. After a deal of persuasion and argument that he was a civilian, based on his having no uniform or arms, Smidt consented to release him on the same terms as he had imposed on me.

Making a fresh start with our guide, as we reached the point of the hill where it was practicable to descend, we saw in a moment that Christine Joubert was carrying out his threat of driving our men out of the laager on the ridge connecting the Imquela with the Majuba. At least 400 Boers were galloping round the base of the Majuba, coming from the direction of the Nek, and making for the ridge where our men were entrenched. The one company of Highlanders left at this position during the night had been reinforced by a company of the Rifles, sent out from Mount Prospect camp during the day, with the object of bringing up ammunition to the top of the Majuba. The Boers, however, prevented them reaching us, and they therefore stayed at the laager.

As yet the advancing body of horsemen was out of sight of the soldiers in the laager; from where we were we had a splendid bird's-eye view of the whole scene of approaching action. We asked our Boer escort (now increased to two men) to stay a few minutes, but they were in a hurry to get rid of us, as they thought it possible an attack on the hill might be renewed, or, at all events, they had yet work before them to drive our men out of that laager, if the mounted Boer force approaching it were not equal to the task. We were so anxious as to the fate of the men in the laager that we prevailed on our guides to stay awhile. In a few minutes the Boers below came within range of the laager; then every man dismounted behind a knoll intervening between the Boers and the laager or earthwork; Boer skirmishers, creeping onwards on hands and knees, in a few moments were within sight of their enemy, and a rapid discharge of firearms began. Our guides now urged us to be quick and come on, and added significantly that there were some nasty-tempered fellows around us, who might get angry if they saw any of their comrades killed down below there. We were compelled to march, but on our way for a considerable distance kept the combatants in view, and saw the guns from Mount Prospect camp begin to open fire. They threw shells up over the heads of our men on the ridge, to check the advance of the Boers beyond; but, owing to the fact of Mount Prospect being some hundreds of feet below that ridge, the fire of the guns, which, handled by Captain Vibart, had been advanced about a mile from camp towards the ridge, was necessarily guess-work. When the first shell rose up, well clear of the earthwork, and burst not more than 100 yards short of the main body of the attacking party, Cameron and I involuntarily exclaimed, 'What a nuisance!' We were almost forgetting we were in the company of two Boers, because both men spoke English so perfectly, and made themselves so agreeable. Shell after shell, but always short of the enemy, came over the ridge; the Boer skirmishers, undaunted, kept up their fire on the laager. It seemed a question, however, whether the enemy would be able to take the position. Our men were well entrenched, and so far under cover of our artillery, that if the Boers advanced nearer the shells would tell on them. Just as we were persuading our guides to halt again (in two minutes we should lose our view of this second fight), we saw the defenders of the earthwork begin to retreat, making for Mount Prospect by the nearest road.

There was an end of it now, so we trudged on our way. Our guides did not seem at all satisfied that some of the Boers now behind us on the summit of the hill might not make a mistake, and fire on us, so one produced a white pocket-handkerchief, and this, tied to a stick, I carried. For many hundreds of yards down the mountain-side we saw the bodies of our men who had been cut off in their flight. It seemed as if we were never going to get away from the scene of carnage. At the base of the sugar-loaf hill which I have mentioned as a spot we had passed during the night march, an officer's servant, coming after us, said that Captain Morris of the 58th was lying badly wounded a little to our right, so we turned to visit him. He was very weak and exhausted, but conscious, with a wound between the shoulder and the chest, which looked dangerously near the heart. He had heard our voices, and sent his servant to tell us he was there. We could do nothing for him to alleviate his pain, except promise to hurry to camp as fast as possible, and indicate to a party of bearers and the surgeons where he was. His faithful servant had rigged up the best cover he could make by the help of a coat and two sticks, and had propped the wounded man's head upon a pillow made of sod. Poor Captain Morris had come out to his regiment, and had only joined it a few days before the fight. We never expected to see him back in camp alive, but spoke cheerfully, for he set us the example. Lower down the mountain, in all directions, bodies dotted the ground. One or two we went aside to look at; some proved to be wounded only, and these begged for water, which unfortunately we had not, and which was nowhere accessible.

The heat of the sun now was terrific, and Cameron was so exhausted that we had to rest before even we had got to the foot of the hill. Our guides had left us as soon as we were a fair distance from the hill-top, and gave me the white flag in case we should come across any of their men lower down. As the enemy were now in occupation of the line of march by which we had come up at night, we determined to keep to the left to avoid a meeting with them, and, having got to the base of the mountain, to strike a bee-line for camp. It was with no little difficulty we found a way down, so broken is the mountain slope on this side. Up hill our way lay when once this was accomplished; up hill and down rather, I should say, for a good three miles before we came to the low ground below the plateau on which our camp stood. My companion, who had shown signs of distress, at last said he could not go a step farther, and we were yet a long mile from camp. At the first stream we had come to he had drunk too freely. I promised to go on and send a horse for him. Through the long grass, over all kinds of obstacles, I kept on in a straight line for Mount Prospect. Riding out from the camp I saw a mounted man to my left. He beckoned me to come that way. Thinking it was some officious gentleman bent on questioning me, I let him beckon and shout, and kept on my course. When at last I got half-way up the slope leading to the plateau, I was thoroughly done up, and, seeing two of our vedettes high up in front, I called to them to come and bear me a hand. They were two sturdy Highlanders, and, taking an arm each side, they dragged me up to the level. Then it turned out that the mounted man who had been beckoning to me from below to come to him was Sergeant Toole of the artillery. A ravine had separated us, or he would have come straight to my help long ago. To reach the staff lines there was nearly a quarter of a mile of ground to cover yet, and the artillery sergeant insisted on my riding his horse, as he had been sent out to bring in any one he could see. A great, strapping, six-foot fellow, as good-natured as he was tall and brave (he it was who had command of the guns at the Ingogo after the death of Captain Greer and the disablement of Lieutenant Parsons, and who had already done me the service of carrying, on one of the gun limbers, my saddle from the previous battlefield), he helped me up to his saddle, which but for his assistance I never could have reached at that time, and we shortly were within the inner lines.

At the first fort Lieutenant O'Donel of the 58th (recovered from the wound he had received at Laing's Nek fight) was stationed, and he asked me to go to the Commander, who wanted to see any one coming in from the Majuba. I found Colonel Bond cool and collected; but all around were anxious faces, and every one inquiring as to the fate of the General or some brother officer. I had been so long getting back from the hill that I never expected any doubt existed in camp as to the fate of the General by this time. Men had come in; some said they were certain he was taken prisoner; few, if any, reported him wounded. Major Essex and Lieutenant Hamilton (brother-in-law to Sir George Colley) were in the tent into which the Commander took me. The first question was, 'Where is the General?' Before Lieutenant Hamilton I did not like to tell the news too abruptly, but it had to be told. 'No, he isn't dead, he's a prisoner,' remarked Major Essex. 'You've only heard he's dead; we know he's a prisoner.' 'Then, if you know, why do you ask me?' I replied to the excited man.

Colonel Bond was convinced, but Major Essex set about cross-examining me, and flatly contradicting me to such an extent that I had to check him, after making every allowance for his agitation. There was poor Lieutenant Hamilton, hearing of the death of his kinsman, the story told under circumstances which made it look something like an angry dispute. 'I left Cameron about a mile from camp; he's close to the line of telegraph poles. If you send out an orderly, he will come into camp and confirm my story.' Immediately Lieutenant Hamilton left the tent to find Cameron. 'But what proof have you that the General is dead?' resumed Major Essex. 'There is this handkerchief which lay under his head, and which I did not like to take from my pocket whilst Lieutenant Hamilton was present; but I see it is not marked with Sir George Colley's name.' Even that gory token would not satisfy Essex, who very tersely replied, 'Oh, that proves nothing!' 'Very well, I'll say good afternoon then,' and I left him. Coming out after me, he called me back, and added, 'Don't say a word about this to a living soul!' Already every man in camp knew it, as it had gone from one to the other like wildfire. The Highlanders who helped me up to the plateau had heard from me that the General was dead, and so had the group of officers I first met after that. What the value of secrecy in such a case as this was, it is difficult to imagine; it certainly never occurred to me.

Little remains to be told as regards the fight of Sunday, February 27, except details of the affair on the ridge below the mountain. It appears that on this ridge, where the company of Highlanders had been posted during the night, our men never for a moment imagined we above them were being driven from our position, not even when from the side of the mountain facing Mount Prospect they saw a belt of fire run all along the crest. 'Now they're getting it!' our men in the earthwork joyfully said to each other. They were 'getting it'—their comrades, not the Boers. I believe, from what I have heard since, that when the Boer fire first became really severe, Sir George Colley sent a message to his flag-signalman to convey to the officer in command on the ridge below an order to send up men to the summit of the mountain; but whether it was through the fault of the signaller, or that looking up into the strong sun those at the laager could not properly read the signal, that command was never understood. The last order received at the laager as read was, that the position should be held as long as possible, but if it became untenable, the force was to withdraw.

I understand that an account that has appeared in the *Army and Navy Gazette* of affairs on the ridge below Majuba, by an eyewitness, is thoroughly reliable; in fact, the only complete narrative that has been given. I will take the liberty, therefore, of reproducing the main points in it:—

'As our mysterious march on the night of the 26th February began, two companies of the 60th Rifles, under the command of Captains C. H. Smith and R. Henley, were detached from General Colley's small column, and left on the Imquela Mountain. These companies received *no orders*, beyond that they were to remain there. The rest of the column then marched into the dark night on their unknown mission, our destination being guessed at but not announced. The road was rough, and at some places little better than a beaten track, and the men found it hard to pick their steps among the loose stones and earth mounds. But all were cheerful and ready for their work. The ridge at the foot of the heights was reached at about midnight, and here the column made a brief halt, to allow of one company of the 92d (which had lost its "touch") coming up. Here one company of the 92d Highlanders, under Captain P. F. Robertson, was detailed to proceed with Major Fraser, R.E., to a spot about one hundred yards distant, General Colley himself giving the order that they were to remain there, "to dig as good a trench as time would permit of," and further to select a good position to afford cover for the horses and ammunition, etc., that were to be left in charge of the detachment. They were also desired to throw out sentries in the direction of the camp, also a patrol of four men, with a non-commissioned officer, to watch the beaten track along which we had just come, and to act as guides for a company of the 60th Rifles expected from camp to reinforce the Highlanders on the ridge. These orders having been given, the column again moved off, leaving the Highlanders to make their arrangements.

'The men had a brief rest after their walk, and then, assisted by their officers,—Captain P. F. Robertson and Lieutenant G. Staunton,—began the work of making the entrenchments. At about five A.M. the expected company of the 60th Rifles arrived, under the command of Captain E. Thurlow and 2d Lieutenants C. B. Pigott and H. G. L. Howard-Vyse. Surgeon-Major Cornish also accompanied this detachment, with some mules laden with hospital requirements. Captain Thurlow, who had received *no orders*, and who had brought out his men without either their greatcoats or their rations, joined the Highlanders in their work of entrenchment. They had to work hard, so as to complete their work rapidly, and consequently the men had little or no rest that night. At about six A.M. we were visited by Commissariat-General J. W. Elmes, who was returning to the camp, and promised to send out the 60th their rations. Shortly afterwards a conductor named Field arrived with a led mule, laden with stores, etc., for the staff. He was hurrying on to try and reach the summit of the hill before day. Doubts were expressed as to the advisability of his going on alone; but he had his orders, he said (about the only man who had that day!), and so he went on his way. About an hour afterwards a shot was heard, and we afterwards learnt that the conductor had been wounded, and he and his mule taken prisoners! By this time the day had quite broken, the heavy curtain of the night had rolled away, and disclosed before us the rugged and precipitous assent to the Majuba Mountain, which stood directly in front of us, about 1400 yards distant. It stood out in bold relief against a blue-grey sky, and on the summit, and against the sky, the figures of men could be distinctly seen passing to and fro. These were only discernible with the aid of field-glasses, and at that time no great certainty was felt as to their being our own men.

'Away to the south of us, in the direction of the camp, sloped the Imquela Mountain. The glasses were brought to bear on this spot also, where a man was detected signalling with a flag. The officer commanding our party (Captain Robertson, 92d) then signalled the question, "Who are you?" and the answer returned was, "We are two companies of the 60th Rifles, who have been left out here all night." A second message was then sent, asking what their orders were, and the reply returned was, "None." Their position was consequently much the same as ours. All the morning our sentries heard occasional shots, and from time to time were seen small bodies of mounted Boers galloping to and fro near our entrenchment, seemingly to reconnoitre our position. At about eleven o'clock we were joined by a troop of the 15th Hussars, who had just come from the camp, bringing with them the rations for the 60th Rifles. This troop was commanded by Captain G. D. F. Sulivan, and accompanied by 2d Lieutenant Pocklington and Lieutenant H. C. Hopkins, 9th Lancers, attached. Captain Sulivan, having received no orders, remained with our party, dismounting his men, and placing them under cover on the slope, just in rear of our entrenchment. For an hour or two afterwards all remained perfectly quiet. The distant figures on the summit of the Majuba Hill could still be seen passing and repassing against the grey sky. We had now come to the definite conclusion that they were our own men, entrenching themselves on the top of the mountains. They had gained by strategy a strong position; but could they hold it? Even then the question was mooted. All at once, while we were quietly waiting, a continuous and heavy firing broke out on the mountain. We saw the blue smoke rolling across the still sky; we saw an evident stir and excitement among the party on the hill. What was it? Were they attacked, or attacking? Volley after volley rolled forth; it was a heavy and continuous fire, never ceasing for a moment. All glasses were brought to bear on the mountain, and every eye was strained to catch a sight of what was going on. After a few minutes the figure of a man hurrying down towards us was visible,—a wounded man, no doubt,—and a mounted Hussar was sent out to bring him in. He proved to be a wounded man of the 58th, and from him we learnt something of the disaster that had befallen our column. The General was dead, lying on his back, with a bullet through his head. Our men were nearly all either wounded or taken prisoners. The hill-top was covered with the bodies of the brave fellows, who had fought to the last. Even while he spoke we could see the desperate retreat had begun, and a few desperate figures were seen struggling down among the stones and boulders. Our men were flying, there was no question about that now. In a few minutes the enemy would be upon us, but we were prepared for them. I never saw men steadier or more prepared to fight; although, as I glanced round, I felt how hopeless such a fight would be. My fear, however, did not seem to be participated in by either officers or men, for Captain Robertson (the officer in command) at once began his preparations for a determined resistance. The ammunition boxes were opened, and placed at equal convenient distances all round the entrenchment. Half the entrenchment was manned by the Highlanders, and the other half by the Rifles. These preparations were quietly and promptly made. The men were silent, but steady. Looking round, every face was set with a grave determination "to do," and there was not a word audible as the orders were spoken and the commands obeyed. The low (and to an experienced eye) fragile turf walls that were to offer shelter seemed but poor defences, now that they were about to be tried. They were only about four feet high by two feet thick, with one exit at the rear, and could never have stood before a fire such as was even now pouring down the slope of Majuba. The wounded were now being brought in rapidly by our mounted Hussars, who did their work steadily. Some of the poor fellows were terribly wounded, and although Surgeon-Major Cornish did his best for them unassisted, many had to lie unattended to in their suffering. All brought the same bitter news of defeat and annihilation, not very reassuring to our little force, which was now about to take its part in the day's engagement. As suddenly as it had begun, the firing as suddenly ceased; and we knew that the dreadful task of clearing the heights was done, and our resistance was about to begin. We could see the Boers clustering like a swarm of bees at the edge of our ridge. Every moment we expected a rush, and an attack. But they hesitated. They were waiting—waiting for the party of some 600 or 700 mounted Boers who presently appeared upon our left flank. Our entrenchment was now almost surrounded. The mounted Boers were the first to attack us, on our left flank, and their fire was spiritedly replied to by the Rifles. At this moment, and while we were actually engaging our enemy, the order came from the camp desiring Captain Robertson to retreat his force without delay. No such easy matter now, for the order came almost too late; the Boers were within easy range of us, and determined to attack. Nevertheless, in the same orderly and steady manner in which the preparations for defence had been made, the preparations for retreat were begun. Much credit is due to Captains Robertson and Thurlow for the energetic manner in which they helped to load the mules, securing a safe retreat for the ammunition and stores, and then assisting Surgeon-Major Cornish to get off the wounded. All this time we were under fire, and it was while retreating that poor Cornish was killed. When our little entrenchment had been cleared of its stores, the real retreat began, made under a murderous fire, which followed us as we hurried down the steep slope into the ravine below. Captain Sulivan, with his troop of Hussars, was placed to the right flank, to try and cover the retreat in that direction. By this time the Boers had partially occupied our entrenchment, having broken down its defences easily enough. And we had scarcely retreated down the steep slope and into the ravine, before they occupied the ridge above us in hundreds, sending volley after volley after our retreating men. It was a case now of *suave qui peut*, and to me the only marvel is how we lost so few under the circumstances. Our casualties were four killed (including Surgeon-Major Cornish), eleven wounded, and twenty-two prisoners. The Highlanders suffered the most. The officers were the last to leave the ridge. I saw Captain Robertson standing on the crest of the slope giving some final directions just a moment before the ridge was entirely covered by the Boers, and his escape consequently was almost a miraculous one. I was in the ravine before I heard our artillery open fire upon the Boers. Second Lieutenant Staunton, 92d Highlanders, was taken prisoner. We were never joined by the two companies of the Rifles who were left on the Imquela Mountain the night before, nor did I see them under fire at any part of the day. Thus ended our brief battle, and only those who took part in it can tell the bitterness of having to retreat, utterly routed and defeated as we were.'

The circumstances of Surgeon-Major Cornish's death, mentioned in the foregoing narrative, may be supplemented. Staying behind with the stretcher-bearers when our men retreated from the ridge down the slope leading to O'Neill's farm, some of his men were disabled by the fire of the enemy. There was only one man, Captain Robertson's piper, and two of the Army Hospital Corps available for bearers' duty, but they managed to follow for some distance their comrades who were in front. Carrying a wounded man on a stretcher was not easy work, looking at the path pitched at an angle of nearly forty-five degrees. The ambulance party with the surgeon therefore halted when they found they could not escape out of range of the Boers. The latter came out to the brow of the ridge, and, looking down, saw the party unarmed, with a red-cross flag. So close were they that the one party could plainly hear what the other said. The Dutchmen called out, 'Who are you?' and the reply was given, 'We are attendants on the wounded.' Immediately afterwards some of the Boers fired a volley at the group. Surgeon-Major Cornish was sitting on one of the handles of the stretcher; a bullet took effect in his chest, every man around him was also hit, two of them severely. The piper, seeing the officer fall, came to him, saying, 'O doctor, I am sorry you are wounded!' 'I shall not be a doctor long,' was the dying man's reply. And his prophecy was true.

On the Majuba, Surgeon-Major Landon met his death also whilst trying to save the lives and mitigate the sufferings of others. The heroism of Lance-Corporal Farmer, of the Army Service Corps (brought to the notice of the authorities by Dr. Mahon, the only surviving surgeon of those who went out on this fatal day), obtained for him the Victoria Cross. Staying by his chief, he held a white flag up over the wounded until he received a bullet in his arm. Raising the flag with his second arm, he kept it aloft until it was respected. He seems to be the only man who obtained any credit for the day's work, and he deserved his reward.

If there had been gloomy intervals during the stay of the Natal Field Force at Mount Prospect before this date, they were nothing compared to the sadness felt now. More officers, more men (how many no one knew), and the General were to be added to the already long list of killed. What had become of Major Fraser, Colonel

Stewart, Captain Hornby, and a host of others, I could give no information about, and Cameron could not supply it. Every one was convinced that they were all dead or wounded. I reported, according to my belief, that Commander Romilly was dead, for at that time, having the assurance of the sailor standing guard over him, I had no reason for thinking otherwise. Commander Romilly died shortly after he reached the camp, regretted by all who were privileged to know him. His face bore testimony to his kind-heartedness. At the Cape station, some years ago, he personally attended one of his Kroomen laid up with smallpox. Commander Romilly contracted the disease, and carried the honourable marks on his face to his grave. Perhaps no incident than this tending of a black servant suffering from a virulent disease could furnish a better example of his nobility of disposition. For him any of his men would have died, and at his graveside the rough, hardy seamen were unnerved.

Colonel Bond hearing from us that Smidt was willing that a bearer party and surgeons should go up to the hill-top to attend to our wounded, an additional complement to that already despatched was told off at once for the duty. But the night was gathering in rapidly, and a heavy cold mist even at this time was settling over the Majuba heights; it augured ill for the chances of finding those scattered about the slopes and ravines of that terrible mountain.

At Mount Prospect camp there had been no alarm felt until the crisis was over and it became apparent that we were beaten. Then two companies of the 92d, and two 9-pounders, went out a mile towards the mountain to check pursuit; tents were struck, provisions carried to the redoubt, and every preparation made to defend the camp, since once we were driven off the top of the Majuba, the laager on the ridge below was untenable, as the victors from the high ground could shoot down into it.

That the Boers intended following up their success by attacking our standing camp they all aver, but say that the mist and darkness coming on prevented them carrying out that intention. The last memorable victory that the Dutch had gained was on a Sunday, when in the early days of the colony of Natal they had been fiercely attacked by the Zulu army close to Pietermaritzburg. They then charged the Zulu host, and routed it as thoroughly as they had done the party which, under Sir George Colley, threatened their stronghold on this Sabbath.

This is the way that Joubert reported the achievement to the Vice-President, a despatch unique as the production of a military commander in this age :—

'I was sitting writing copies of President Brand's letters, and also a letter to Herbert Stewart. At four o'clock I woke every man up to his position, and I commenced a report for General Cronje. I was still sitting writing, and the sun had just risen, when it was reported to me that the troops were coming up the right-hand hill. Then it was "to saddle, to saddle," but to our astonishment we saw that the enemy had entire possession of the hill, and that already a considerable number were on the summit. Apparently one would have thought that everything was lost to us, and so it would actually have been if they had retained possession of the hill; but beyond all our expectations the Lord assisted us, and we all ascribe it to the most wonderful deliverances and help by an all-governing and mighty God. Our men climbed the mountain with a courage and energy beyond description. The troops under the personal command of General Colley would not surrender the position. They fought like true heroes, but our God who gave us the true victory and protected us, exceeded gloriously all acts of courage and tact. The most wonderful thing to us is, that on our side only one was killed, and so far as it has come to my knowledge one severely wounded, and four slightly. The one killed is Johannes Bekker, Middleburg district. The wounded are Groenewold, Van der Merwe, Muller, Labuschagne, and Vermaak. The dead on the other side are not accurately known, through the unevenness of the ground, but can be estimated at more than 100. It is unknown how many officers fell with General Colley; nearly twenty severely wounded, and more slightly. Seven officers, forty-five men, and a sergeant have been made prisoners, which prisoners I have been compelled to send to you at Middleburg. I hear that the English have been reinforced by 2000. The soldiers who fought against us were the 92d Highlanders, two companies of the 58th Regiment, and 60th Rifles. The cannon were not brought within range, but fired upon our men from the camp when they stormed the last schanse. I have now so much to do that I cannot write more, therefore I conclude with wishing your Honour joy at the successful issue of to-day's battle, and that this day may be considered for the future a day of thanksgiving and prayer.'

The Vice-President's reply in an 'Order of the Day' is conceived in a no less pious strain:—

'ORDER OF THE DAY.

'TO THE COMMANDANT-GENERAL, COMMANDERS, OFFICERS, AND BURGHERS IN THE TRANSVAAL ARMY AT THE DRAKENSBERG.

'SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
HEIDELBERG, *March* 7, 1881.

'MEN AND BROTHERS,—Our hearts urge us to say a word to you. We know that the whole South African Republic looks up to you with gratitude. We glory not in human power, it is God the Lord who has helped us—the God of our fathers, to whom, for the last five years, we have addressed our prayers and supplications. He has done great things to us, and hearkened to our prayers.

'And you, noble and valiant brothers, have been in His hands the means of saving us; your valour and courage have proved to the mighty power which so unjustifiably assailed us that even the weakest people, fighting for its liberty, is able to effect prodigies of valour.

'Three times now—at Laing's Nek, at Skheyns Hoogte—you have with your small force repulsed and beaten an overwhelming enemy. Cannon and treacherous and horrifying missiles have not dismayed you.

'Your Commandant-General writes, not speaking of himself (he is too noble to praise himself)—no, speaking of officers and very young warriors: "My regard for them is great, their names deserve to be preserved with those of a Wellington or Napoleon." We repeat it, after His Honour, and make it general of the Commandant-General and of every burgher who fought. Our regard for you is great; in the name of the Fatherland we thank you, you have deserved much of the Fatherland.

'Continue so to the end. The God who guides the hearts of kings like running brooks will deliver us. Trust in Him.—The Government of the South African Republic,

'S. J. P. KRUGER, Vice-President.'

Of the total force engaged this day, six officers lost their lives. Besides those whose names I have already mentioned, there was

Lieutenant Thrower, Naval Brigade, and Captain Singleton, 92d. The last-mentioned was a most promising officer, and a favourite in his regiment, with which he served with such distinction in Afghanistan that he was raised to the rank of major. The notification of his promotion was only received a short time before his death. Wounded on the hill by a bullet which entered his thigh and shattered his leg, he was taken prisoner after the fight was over, but brought into Mount Prospect camp the following day. There he lingered for a long time, for a month or more. At last it was found necessary to amputate the limb, and that operation he only survived a few days. Of officers wounded, there were Captain Anton and Lieutenant Miller, 94th (who had been attached to the 58th Regiment, and had volunteered to accompany the force), Major Hay and Lieutenant Hamilton, 92d; of the 58th Regiment, besides Captain Morris and Lieutenant Hill, Lieutenant Lucy (a young officer, who made himself conspicuous by his coolness during the last few eventful minutes on the hill before the retreat began), who hurt his back by falling down a precipice; and of the Army Service Corps, Conductor Field, who, whilst in charge of supply ammunition, which he was endeavouring to convey from the ridge to the summit of the hill, was shot and taken prisoner. Of the non-commissioned officers and men who had fought on the crest of the hill, some thirty of the 58th were killed, twenty-two wounded, and thirteen taken prisoners, besides Captain Hornby. Of the 92d, thirty-five were killed, twenty-five wounded, and twenty-four taken prisoners. Of the Naval Brigade, sixteen were killed and fifteen wounded. Of the Army Hospital Corps, two were wounded. Of the detachments which had been posted either on the Imquela or the ridge below us, there were two of the 15th Hussars and two of the 2d-21st killed, one Hussar wounded, and one taken prisoner, and eleven of the 3d-60th taken prisoners, and seventeen wounded. Altogether, our losses at the Majuba may roundly be estimated as follows:—Officers killed, six (including the General); wounded, nine; prisoners, six. Non-commissioned officers and men, eighty-six killed, one hundred and twenty-five wounded, fifty-three prisoners. Making in round numbers a total loss to our strength of effectives at Mount Prospect of two hundred and eighty.

To say that the initial error which led to this disaster was the injudicious posting of our men, is to make a statement the truth of which is self-evident, if the nature of the mountain and the respective positions of the combatants is considered. To station our men where they were posted was to place them at the one point on the Majuba which offered the least natural advantage for checking the approach of an enemy, for the advance of the Boers was made in safety to within a short distance of our position. Sir George Colley has been credited with the assignment of the men to their positions. That is positively true; he did that when it was dark. When daylight came, and the nature of the slopes of and avenues of approach to the mountain could be ascertained, did no member of his staff point out the advisability of a new formation of our lines? If not, the staff must take their share of the blame. Sir George Colley is dead, and these nice points will probably never be properly cleared up. Had he survived, he would no doubt readily have taken on his own shoulders every particle of blame, just as he did after the failure at Laing's Nek on the 28th January.

Downcast as every one was the night after the Majuba disaster, I think the men would have been glad if the Boers had attacked our camp. Smarting under three successive defeats, revenge on the Boers was the one thing they hoped and longed for.

CHAPTER XVII.

BURYING THE DEAD—AN INTERVIEW WITH JOUBERT—THE GENERAL'S FUNERAL.

THE day following the battle was comparatively a fine one, and now the work of collecting and burying the dead and of bringing in the wounded was carried on in earnest. Imagine the sufferings of those who had life left in them in being carried down off the mountain! Going to O'Neill's farm, situate just at the base of the ridge from which the Highlanders and Rifles had been forced to retire, I found it converted into a temporary hospital. The owner had left it to take protection nearer our camp. The red-cross flag was flying there, but as it was within range of the rifles of the Boers now occupying the ridge above, you had to approach the house cautiously. Every room was filled with wounded men. Commander Romilly, to my surprise still alive, was being carried on a stretcher from the dwelling as I entered. He was conscious, and recognised every now and again some of his men. My intention was to have gone up the Majuba again with a burying party, with which I started by the way over the ridge above O'Neill's farm, and then up the path we had taken on the night of the 26th. At O'Neill's, however, they were short of several things, and there was no one there mounted save myself to take a message to our camp, so I rode back with one asking for more bearers and attendants for the wounded. That saved me, I found out afterwards, a very useless climb up the ridge to meet the Boer General according to promise given the previous day.

Colonel Bond had just received information that a large body of Boers were moving towards us from the Nek, and he dare not weaken his camp at such a moment by sending out more men to do duty at O'Neill's farm. Returning to the temporary hospital with this message, I found Cameron there. He had been at the trouble of climbing on foot to the ridge above, hoping to get to the top of the Majuba that way, and had been turned back by the Boer outposts, who said no one was to pass—that was their order. We then decided to go together to the Nek direct to see the Boer leaders, and, after rigging up a white flag, started for that point. Coming round the edge of a patch of Indian corn, we saw, after having gone a mile or more, two young Boers busy helping themselves to the grain. They had their backs turned to us, and were dismounted, so did not notice our approach. Thinking it better not to come on them too suddenly, we hallooed out. Turning sharp round and seeing us, they bobbed down immediately, at the same time grasping their rifles. This movement was not very reassuring, so we called out 'White flag,' and held up that emblem of peace boldly. 'White flag; all right; stay there,' they replied, and, mounting their horses, came up to us. Smidt's pass, which I carried, was, I think, Greek to them; however, they escorted us towards the Nek, but our attempts at conversation in the English language were not very successful. Their clothing was ragged, their accoutrements patched and shabby; their rifles were the only clean things about them, and comprised their sole weapons. Approaching the Nek, we overtook an old Boer riding in the same direction. He had just come from our camp, whither, under a flag of truce, he had been carrying a message. To his charge we were delegated. He could speak English, but was evidently indisposed to practise that faculty. Our ride began to be interesting as we passed the farm of Laing, and over the ground of part of the first engagement. We thought our escort was going to take us right over the Nek, so near did he lead us up the slope leading to it; but just when we arrived at a point that we must see the fortifications, if any, there he told us to wait until he came back to us.

We had waited half an hour, an hour, nearly two hours. The first half-hour we were interested in looking at the Boer positions right and left of the Nek, in which we could see men distinctly enough scrutinizing us. After the first half-hour we got tired of the view At times, Boers, in parties of ten, twenty, and thirty, came, some on foot, without boots or stockings, some mounted, but all armed trooping past us to the Nek. They evidently had been on outpost or other duty; no doubt some of them formed part of the force the approach of which towards our lines that morning had led to the idea that an attack was about to commence. Of the two or three hundred men who passed us, only one offered any insulting remark, and he waited till he had got some fifty yards away, and then, shaking his fist, used language more forcible than polite in broken English. Some of the passers-by examined the pass Smidt had given me, most of them civilly said 'Good-day.' After the first hour had passed, a Boer who had acted as interpreter to the Commandant on the previous day, came and asked our business. We told him we considered ourselves on *parole*, and had come to redeem our word, and I handed him copy of some telegrams I had sent about the fight. He said he would bring the General and the President, as we expressed a wish to see the latter also. We waited for another hour or more, and had just made up our minds that we had better go back to the camp, when at last General Joubert and General Smidt, a chaplain,—preacher as they call him,—and half a dozen staff officers, came down to us. Riding in front was Mr. Aylward, late editor of *Witness*, with whom I had a slight acquaintance in Maritzburg. I was rather astonished to see Mr. Aylward, and greeted him, 'Halloo, Aylward, what are you doing here?' He replied, 'I am correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, and doctor here; last night I attended to all your wounded men; took off a shoulder of one of your men. How are you? Let me introduce you and your friend.' The introduction took place promptly. 'I have lots of information for you,' added Mr. Aylward, and he read the following, which he informed us had been sent by telegram to Lady Colley through the wire at the Mount Prospect camp. I learnt afterwards the message, though handed in, was regarded as improper for transmission to its intended destination:—'General Joubert, Laing's Nek, 28th February 1881, to Lady Colley, Pietermaritzburg.—Regret extremely sad fate of Colonel Colley, who fell in action at one o'clock, February 27, in attempting to hold mountain fortress forming right of Boer position. Regret he should have fallen in a war, the outcome of a policy which he has not caused; also that he should fall in such an unprovoked and unholy war against the Boer people struggling for freedom. Can only aid you in your sorrow by giving every facility for the removal of the corpse of your gallant husband.' 'Now, all that I am going to give you has been sent to the *Daily Telegraph*,' resumed Aylward. Meanwhile no one else in the group ever had a chance of getting in a word edgeways. There was Joubert with his attendants, all mounted, waiting patiently while the voluble 'doctor' delivered himself as rapidly as a man could speak. One would have taken him for the General, or at least chief of the staff. I remarked to him, 'Well, Aylward, I heard that you had gone over the border, but not in this capacity.' 'Oh, that's all right,' he answered; 'I know what I'm about.' I told him I thought perhaps he might not care to have it said that he was so busy in the Boer lines, and if he did not wish the fact divulged we would say nothing about it. 'What do you mean?' he inquired. 'Well, it might be awkward for you, perhaps, if the English were not satisfied about you being a correspondent only.' 'Oh, that's all right, my friend; I shall be able to give a good account of myself, you may be sure, at any time.' Satisfied on that point, I proposed we should proceed to business; so, lying on the grass, took a note of the information Aylward desired to impart, as he said, 'Just take what I give you, and we shall save time; it's all gone to the *Daily Telegraph*.'

His communication and details of the interview may be stated in this strain:

Aylward: 'The body of the General (His Excellency Sir George Pomeroy Colley) is lying now in our headquarters camp and watched over by an English guard of Highlanders taken prisoners by us, and the circumstances of his death are these: When the Boer right attack drove in the English to the centre of the koppie, Colonel Colley, after the troops broke, himself began to fly. He was about eight paces in the rear when he was shot. He was the last officer who turned.'

'Telegram from General Joubert, Laing's Nek, to President Brand, Bloemfontein, Orange Free State:—

'Your letters received about peace negotiations nearly lulled me to an unwise unsuspiciousness. . . . [I asked, 'Is that right?' Aylward: 'Yes; only these fellows can't write English.'] But General Colley on Sunday morning attacked us as we were writing to you and to him. He attacked our right, and got possession of high natural fortress; built schansen and walls. Boers gallantly stormed in five hours; total defeat over British troops; Governor shot dead. Seven officers and one company in our hands prisoners. Will negotiate, but not make submission or cease opposition.'

The next information given us was a list of prisoners and wounded in their hands. And as to the casualties on the Boer side, we were told they were—Bekker killed, five wounded, two horses killed. Next Mr. Aylward obliged us with an account of the battle. I will only repeat the parts that will be information to the public : 'Five companies of Boers—three of which had been mounted, and brought their horses to the foot of precipices, and two of whom were on foot—were brought in position ; but the first shot had been fired earlier, at 5.30, and a signalman had been taken prisoner by us after being wounded. The chief leaders of the most advanced storming parties were Commandants Roos and Ferreira—not the Ferreira taken prisoner. . . . About 1.12, the Highlanders, having completely given way on the north front, General Colley was seen attempting to rally them, when he fell with two mounted officers.'

Interrupting Aylward's story, I said, 'There you are wrong; because there were no mounted men on the hill.' 'Yes, there were,' he replied. 'No, not a single horse.' 'Then it was a mule or a donkey.' 'No; you're wrong again. The only animal on the hill was a dog.' 'Well, then, we must have taken two or three men standing together to be horses.' Aylward continued :—

'The Boer storming force having completed the recovery of the summit of the hill, filed down the south side of the berg, and fire was suddenly opened on them from a laager held by a company of Rifles and a company of Highlanders. A volley was fired on us, but failed to kill or wound one of our men. Francois Joubert stormed the redoubt, and the English fled. Later on, some English cavalry, that had come out apparently with reserve ammunition or provisions, we attacked close to the pass, and drove them back, taking one prisoner. We charged them ; that is to say, we rode up to within close shooting distance of them. Several of them we shot, and we brought as many of their swords to our camp. The total force on the Boer side, either storming or held in reserve for the right attack, was 450 men.'

This last statement we took particular care to ask Joubert to endorse, and he did so in an emphatic manner. 'Do you want to know anything more?' asked Aylward, who seemed jealous of any one but himself giving information. Cameron, who had evinced a growing dislike for this gentleman, replied somewhat brusquely that he had come to speak to General Joubert. To this Aylward replied that anything the General had to say would be said through him. Joubert assenting, repeated that all that Aylward had said was true. Cameron, however, persisted in ignoring Aylward, and, finding Joubert ready to speak for himself, the following conversation took place:—

Correspondent: 'As it is possible you may be misunderstood in England, is there anything you would care to state for publication?'—Joubert: 'I don't think if the truth comes from our side it will be believed. Everything I can say is already put in writing to the Governor to the Ministers in England. Nothing will help now. God may hear my prayer; England doesn't.'—Correspondent: 'Would you accept confederation?'—Joubert: 'In what way?'—Correspondent: 'With independence in the Transvaal as part of the South African empire?'—Joubert: 'We have explained it thoroughly to the Government, to the Governor, and to every one we could urge to consider a scheme of confederation with all the other countries of South Africa. We have put it down clear; we have put it in our proclamation again and again, and said all that can be said about it. Do you believe that England—I would not say the honest people of England don't—do you think or believe that the Government of England, as they were informed by their servants here—by their high men here—want the welfare of South Africa?'—Correspondent: 'Well, people have different notions. Of course, as a British subject, I am of opinion that the war must go on; but I think it is a great pity. If you had not taken up arms you would have been in the right; but perhaps people in England are not acquainted with all sides of the question. But now we have been defeated, the war must go on. Perhaps at the end of it you may get all you want, because by the end of the war the English people may probably know the rights and wrongs of the whole affair. There will, however, be a terrible loss of life before that. We can always go on. Though our men have been beaten here, they won't always be beaten.'—Joubert: 'Will they go on until the Transvaal is beaten and destroyed?'—Correspondent: 'Of course they can't "destroy the Transvaal"; but they will go on until you lay down your arms.' Joubert: 'Oh yes; that is the way. You shoot us first, and then say, "Lay down your arms."'—Correspondent: 'But you fired the first shot at Pretoria.'—Joubert: 'Oh no; you did.'—Correspondent: 'But our people there say you did.'—Aylward: 'Just like the liars; I know the English.—Correspondent: 'The report, sir, comes from Englishmen who are gentlemen.'—Joubert: 'Just so. What is the good of us saying anything? How can we be believed?'—Correspondent: 'Well, you see we have had all these wars in South Africa; we thought we had to fight the Zulus because they were threatening you.'—Joubert: 'Oh, we could have fought them well.'—Correspondent: 'But then the Secocoeni war; you must admit you utterly failed to fight Secocoeni.'—Joubert: 'Then, if you say that, what is the good of talking? How can you say England wants the truth?' (Excitedly) 'England doesn't want the truth from us! They want their own truth—the truth which will suit the scheme of their own Ministers. That is the truth for them; and whatever we say, that is not truth. We Boers want peace, and we would never try to fight England or her troops; but we will die, all, every one of us, for our liberty,—we will die for our liberty.'—Correspondent: 'I answer, you get your liberty without dying. You have a lot of brave fellows here, I see; why should they die?'—Joubert: 'Listen now. President Brand wrote me a letter asking if we could not have negotiations for peace. I sat up all night to consider and write a letter about it, and just when I had concluded my letter I was attacked by your troops. I sent my letter to your Governor, and I sent it to President Brand for advice, and again I am attacked. I am now tired. I don't see any other way than for me to be killed, and I *will* fight to the end. I know England will fight for honour, for predominance; and we will fight for liberty till we die.'

When asked to explain about the letters written, referred to, Joubert said: 'General Smidt received a letter last Thursday about peace proposals. Smidt replied to your people he had received the letter, and had sent a messenger, telling him to drive his horse as hard as he could to reach President Kruger with it; and we told your Governor the letter could not reach Kruger in less than two days, and the answer in four days. Just after sending the letter to Kruger, the Commandant in Heidelberg told us that, owing to the restlessness of Magato, a Kaffir chief at Rustenberg, he could not give an answer at once, as he (Kruger) had had to go to Rustenberg. So we saw it would take five days to get an answer, and we gave notice of that in writing to Colonel Stewart, A.M.S., to your Governor, and the only answer we got from you was a bullet fired at our vedettes.

Alyward: 'And the General (Joubert) fully believed that no breach of peace or advance by the British would be made during the interval until the Government at Heidelberg had replied; and the General (Joubert) complains that long before even forty-eight hours had expired, our left outpost was fired on by cannon advanced to the right of the British camp.'

It was explained that such an action was not contrary to the usages of war, no cessation of hostilities having been agreed on.

Having a desire to get some facts, I in turn put some questions to the General: 'How many men had you at the Skheyns Hoogte fight?'—Joubert: 'I will tell you the truth plainly. When the battle began we had about 160 men, with patrols 200. After nearly all the fight was over, I sent 100 reinforcements, and in the night 70 men, and the day after I came myself with 60 men more.'—'And how many did you lose there, General?'—'We lost eight men killed, and nine wounded.'

In the course of further conversation with members of the staff, we learned that the Boers were greatly surprised to find us on the hill above them, and particularly because it was Sunday; but we made them fight on Sunday, and they made up their minds to drive us out of the position. How they managed to do so they could not tell, except that God fought for them. Though they expected to take the position, they did not expect it would be so early in the day. During the latter part of the interview, Cameron and Aylward were not improving their acquaintance with each other. The former at last remarked: 'I raise my hat' (suiting the action to the word) 'to you, gentlemen; you are brave men, and fighting for your country; but to a renegade like that' (pointing to Aylward) 'I wish to say nothing.' Aylward made remarks about 'the impertinence of that fellow,' etc. etc., and I thought it was time the interview closed. Aylward threatened to 'make it warm' for Cameron if he was caught in the Boer lines, and there was altogether every appearance of the wrangle assuming serious proportions. Although this seemed to amuse some of Joubert's staff, it was hardly in keeping with the object of our visit to the Boer lines, so we bade good-day, shaking hands all round, with one exception. Joubert good-humouredly exchanged riding-whips with me when asked, and our respective pieces of rhinoceros hide went from one to the other.

When we were on the point of leaving, an ambulance wagon from our camp, under a white flag, came to the foot of the brow, and a note was handed to the group of Boers amongst which we stood. Joubert, after opening it, handed it to Aylward, who read it aloud. It was from the Rev. Mr. Ritchie, asking that the body of the General might be given up to the British. Aylward immediately advised Joubert it was not right that 'a parson' should make such a request; that only the officer in charge of the camp could do such a thing. The General seemed impressed with this idea; and Aylward wrote at once a reply in language which would hardly have been palatable to any gentleman in our camp. I appealed to Aylward not to make a fuss about such a matter, as no slight was intended. At the same time Cameron began to argue that the request was perfectly in order; and Aylward had his say about the 'impertinence of that fellow daring to instruct General Joubert and his staff.' Things looked unpleasant; at last we prevailed on Joubert to have the language of the reply modified, since he would not concede the point that the Rev. Mr. Ritchie was the right person to make such a request. We had on our side as peacemaker at this juncture the chaplain of General Joubert, the Rev. Mr. Ueckerman. Joubert, moreover, readily consented to give up any of the personal property on the body of the General at the time of his death, if it could be traced to any of the Boers. Taking the reply back to camp, we found that two requests—one from Colonel Bond, and one from Major Essex—had been sent to Joubert for the body, but unfortunately they had not reached him, owing, presumably, to the fact that the messengers had taken the road to the hill where the fight took place, whereas they should have gone direct to the Nek. Another messenger and wagon was immediately despatched, this time in the right direction.

Joubert was good enough to give Cameron and myself a pass, to prevent any interference from his patrols on our way back to Mount Prospect. We had occasion to exhibit it once or twice; a glance at it was sufficient for any of the vedettes we encountered.

During our interview we had inquired anxiously for Major Fraser, Colonel Stewart, and other officers, whose fate was unknown in our camp. The Boer staff, however, knew nothing about the staff officers we named, and the conclusion come to was that both these gentlemen had lost their lives, and their bodies, lying in some ravine or donga, had escaped the notice of our burying parties. It was no little surprise to see, at midnight on the 28th, Major Fraser suddenly come into the telegraph tent to send a message to England reporting that he was still in the land of the living. With a borrowed helmet, which came down over his face, his arm in a sling, and without arms or distinguishing badge of his rank, I mistook him at first for a private, and it was only by his voice that I recognised him. I think a sudden appearance of this nature of a man in the flesh who has long since been reckoned dead, is as startling to one's nerves as the sudden death of a man without warning at one's side. The Major was in a very good state of preservation, notwithstanding the fact that he had sprained his arm in falling down a precipice, and had been for forty-eight hours without any other food than a couple of land crabs. He told me briefly his adventures. In scrambling down the hill he had lost his footing and fallen, and lay for some time insensible. When he became conscious it was well on towards nightfall, and the mist which had settled round the mountain prevented him from seeing anything. He had, however, a pocket compass, and, steering his way by this, he made, as he thought, in the direction of our camp. Next morning, to his surprise, he found himself behind the Boer lines, a fact which he could only account for by the ironstone having affected his compass and made it unreliable. Lying close all day, he managed to escape observation, and when the darkness set in made another attempt to get back to Mount Prospect. Coming right over the Nek, he was more lucky this time than on the previous occasion, and gained our lines by midnight, meeting on the way a fatigue party returning from work on the Majuba. Still the fate of Colonel Stewart was not known; Major Fraser had not seen him after a certain time; one at least of the staff had fallen a victim. Some days later, however, we heard of the capture of Colonel Stewart by the enemy. He was taken two or three days after the fight, at a point near Coldstream several miles away to the rear of the Nek.

On the morning of the 1st of March the body of the brave Sir George Pomeroy Colley was brought in from the Nek in an ambulance wagon. An hour before the corpse was placed in the coffin, many took a last look at him who was so well loved and respected. The features were perfectly still; the dead man might have been asleep, so placid was the expression. At five in the afternoon the body of the General was placed on a gun-carriage, the coffin covered by the Union Jack, and again the strains of the 'Dead March' and the mournful sounds of muffled drums were heard, as the procession of soldiers, headed by the Rev. Mr. Ritchie, followed their leader to the grave. The bearers inside the cemetery were Colonels Bond, Parker, and Ashburnham, Majors Essex and Fraser, Captains Vibart and Smith, and Major Elmes. The body was placed in a grave, one on the extreme right, in a line where lay Colonel Deane, Major Hingeston, Lieutenants Inman, Baillie, and Dolphin. Close by the General's grave lay Captain MacGregor (late assistant military secretary), Lieutenants O'Connell, Garrett, and Wilkinson, and Captain Greer. Drs. Cornish and Landon, and Lieutenant Trower, R.N.—the three last mentioned killed at the Majuba Mountain—were interred at the same time as the body of His Excellency Sir George Pomeroy Colley, Administrator of Natal and the Transvaal, and Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Forces in the Transvaal and Cisvaal.

The following lines, from the pen of Mr. Edgar Jennings Taylor, of Pietermaritzburg, written a day or two after the fight, I am privileged to reproduce, and they may well close the narrative at this point:—

GEORGE POMEROY COLLEY,

GOVERNOR OF NATAL,

KILLED IN ACTION, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1881.

'Yes, he fought well'; so spake the little knot
Of foemen gathered round the outstretched form,
Which on the blood-stained turf lay motionless,
Where the last stand was made, and where, at length,
The few survivors of his gallant band
Cast down their useless weapons in despair.
'Twas here God's angel, with a hand of ice,
Touched him, and said, 'Thy Master calleth thee.'

But six short months agone we welcomed him,
Trusting—for all was calm before the storm—
His stay amongst us might be fraught with good
For us, and happy for himself and her,
With whom, alas! we mourn.

In that brief space
He gained the hearts of many, the esteem of all.
And now the whirlwind which deceit did sow
Hath him for victim, and hath laid him low.

. . . .

He needs no tears who, in the van
And forefront of the fight,
Met death as should an Englishman
Upon Majuba's height.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SIR EVELYN WOOD IN COMMAND—CONTEMPORARY EVENTS IN THE FREE STATE AND CAPE COLONY.

IF Mount Prospect camp had never been put in an effective state of defence before, every effort was made after the Majuba disaster to rectify that shortcoming; what with the continuous wet weather, and labour with the pickaxe and shovel, the men had a hard time of it. How they managed to get a fire to light on the open ground, soaked with moisture, would be a mystery to any one. But they not only got fires to light at meal-times, but cooked the food, made bread for the officers' mess, and supplied a score of delicate dishes in a marvellous manner. Wood was very scarce, and what there was of it was quite green. Add to this drawback to culinary operations out of doors, a steady down-pour of rain, and the miracle of bread-baking, etc., at Mount Prospect was complete. Using their overcoats to create a draught, the servants 'flopped' incessantly at the half-kindled fires in weather that a Kaffir would point-blank refuse to turn out in.

On the morning of the 2d of March, Sir Evelyn Wood came into Mount Prospect camp, having ridden night and day from Pietermaritzburg to take command, as soon as the news of the death of Sir George Pomeroy Colley reached him. A troop of Hussars had been taken out to Skheyns Hoogte by Major Fraser to escort the General into camp. His Excellency was apparently anxious to obtain as much information as possible respecting the fight on the Majuba, and as I happened to be at the Ingogo bringing stores as he passed, he was good enough to put some questions to me about it. Directly after the Majuba disaster there was a good deal of heart-burning at Mount Prospect: one regiment blamed the other; some very ill-natured remarks were made, and there was a fierce controversy raging as to 'who ran first? Did any one see any one run?' and so on. Every third man you met was looking for some other man to inquire whether it was true he had said this, that, and the other about the affair. I found that Sir Evelyn Wood had at Newcastle learnt many details of an extraordinary nature. For instance, that Mr. Hay, a correspondent, had shot the Boer who shot Sir George Colley; that the General had been shot in the forehead, and that at least twenty men had seen that sad affair. All this was news.

The deceased General, then, had *not* been left to stand almost alone, with one officer, one surgeon, and half a dozen men, who were ready to, and did, die by his side! His death, then, *was* revenged by a newspaper correspondent! The whole force did *not* go at the double-quick! This Majuba affair, after all, then, *was not* so very bad!

I ventured to doubt the statement that the slayer of Sir George Pomeroy Colley had been shot by any man on our side on the Majuba, and also to dispute the assertion of any one who said they had seen him shot through the forehead, for the simple reason that there was no wound in the forehead of the deceased up to the time that his body was placed in the coffin. I was not anxious to form one of the controversialists at the camp, and therefore refrained from giving any opinion except on that point. Now, when there is nothing to influence my opinion one way or the other, I would say that it would be impossible to single out any one out of the three contingents on the summit of the Majuba for special steadiness, or for adverse comment as being first in the fight. I see the official report names the Highlanders as men who distinguished themselves by their cool shooting and uniformly steady behaviour. I don't know whether it is fair to infer from this special and sole mention of the Highlanders that there was something wanting in the Naval Brigade or the 58th. I rather fancy it must have been an oversight in the wording of the despatch. Whether it was through an oversight or not, the wording is very unfortunate, especially since only four out of some thousands of rounds fired by our men that morning struck the object aimed at. That is an undeniable fact. If the Highlanders were distinguished above other men for their steady fire, then steadiness counts for very little. I think it is to be deprecated that there should be such a singling out of one regiment from another when it was impossible to do so without hurting the feelings of those significantly left out in the cold. When the fighting line was driven in, and the last stand was made behind the clump of rocks on the edge of the basin, I have already said that Highlanders, Naval Brigade, and 58th were mixed up together in a crowd—you could call it nothing else. When two or three turned and ran, all followed suit alike, and as for there being any attempt to rally after that, no one dreamt of such a thing, no one expected it, and no man of our force did fire a shot after that movement, either at the Boer who shot Sir George Colley or any other living creature on the Majuba. In proof of the erroneous impressions a man may receive under circumstances such as attended the general flight from the hill-top, may be cited the instance of more than one person positively declaring and maintaining, as eye-witnesses of the occurrence, that Sir George Colley was shot through the forehead. Sir Evelyn Wood had been so reliably informed that such was the case, that until I gave him the names of five officers at Mount Prospect who had at the same time as myself looked at the General's body before it was put in its coffin, he treated my version as an erroneous one. Every one he had seen as yet had 'seen the General shot.' I had not, so my account could not add much to his information.

Arriving at Mount Prospect, for the first time during this campaign, on the 2d of March, the new Commander-in-Chief immediately inspected the outlying forts before entering the camp itself, although a heavy thunderstorm came on at the moment he commenced his tour of inspection. Giving orders to concentrate the positions of defence, Sir Evelyn decided to make Newcastle his headquarters until he was ready to make a forward movement. On the 4th of March he was back at Newcastle, and from this time to the conclusion of the peace negotiations, I can answer for the correspondents that they got no peace night or day. The idea prevailed that Sir Evelyn Wood would in person lead the relief column, or a portion of the reinforcements, round by the Wakkerstroom road, and strike a decisive blow at the back of Laing's Nek, whilst Colonel Buller, assuming command at Mount Prospect, would direct a simultaneous attack on the front of the Boer position. It would be a feather in his cap if he could do it before Sir Frederick Roberts arrived, and no doubt it would be. It was necessary, of course, that Sir Evelyn should keep his movements secret as far as possible, and with that object he begged the correspondents not to indulge in prophecy in their telegrams, as every piece of information published in London or Natal immediately became the property of the Boers.

Meanwhile, it may be well to refer to events in the Free State and the Cape Colony. In Holland, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and America the Boers had already found many sympathizers : the success of this rude people, armed only with the rifle, defying the trained bands of British soldiers, supported by a fair proportion of artillery, was marvelled at. The Boers had now beaten our forces in fair and open fight twice (I will reckon the Ingogo a drawn battle). They had beaten us while they were at the top of the hill and we were at the foot ; and they had beaten us when we were at the top and they at the foot of the hill. The sympathy evinced in Europe and America with the Boer cause was as nothing compared with the feeling shown in the two countries I first name, amongst the Dutch populations especially. In the press and in public meetings of the people a revolutionary spirit was manifested, and I am firmly convinced that, had hostilities between the Transvaal Boers and the British been re-opened, the fire would have spread to the Cape Colony and Free State. Between Dutch and English, men who had lived together in harmony for upwards of seventy years—between Dutch and English families associated by the ties of intermarriage, an estrangement was springing up. Fortunately for South Africa, the war of races was brought to a close when it was ; the mischief worked already was incalculable ; the results of that mischief will remain for many a year to come. Now for the first time since the Crimea, English soldiers were fighting against a European nation, and out of four consecutive engagements there was not one in which we could claim success ; and that last affair had shaken all local confidence in the British soldier. Forgetting that at best the Majuba affair was but an outpost engagement, that not half a regiment took part in the fight, the Dutch—and English settlers, I may add—saw in it a token of what they believed to be the demoralization of the British army, marked by the driving of some 300 men from what was considered an impregnable position by assault, and by the death of the Commander of the Forces.

The Free State, by reason of its proximity to the Transvaal and the scene of warlike operations, was the more closely concerned in the struggle. At the outbreak of the struggle, in the *Express*, the avowed organ of the Boers, you might read such arguments as the following :—

'Apart from the inexpediency of any interference on our side, I don't see that the Transvaal people have a shadow of a claim upon our sympathy in their present trouble. Quite fresh in my memory are the arrogant demands made by the Government of the South African Republic upon our Volksraad to surrender to them our whole State, and how, when this demand was refused by our Government, a Transvaal army invaded our territory, quite prepared and willing to carry rapine and bloodshed through the entire country. Fortunately our Government showed a firm front, and, hastily assembling a commando, opposed the invaders before they had penetrated any distance into the State, and thus frustrated their iniquitous designs. The aggressors recrossed the Vaal, and confined themselves there, after, as far as we were concerned, fomenting broils amongst themselves. Since that time, on various occasions, the Transvaal community have evinced anything but a courteous demeanour towards us, notably with regard to the disputed Vaal River boundary. This dispute, as we all know, was eventually settled by the arbitration of Governor Keate, but there is no doubt that his award in this case did injustice to Free State claims, and I think there is also little doubt that an influence inimical to the Free State was brought to bear upon Mr. Keate's decision. I only mention the above circumstances to show that the South African Republic has never, during its seasons of fancied prosperity, regarded the Free State cordially, although, when trouble visits it, as at present, it is quite ready to ask for our sympathy.'

That tone changed rapidly after Laing's Nek engagement, proving the old adage once more, that 'nothing succeeds so well as success,' and that 'blood is thicker than water.' Again I make an extract from the Boer organ, the *Express*, published at Bloemfontein, to show the rapid growth of the revolutionary sentiment, and its prevalence over self-interest when once aroused:—

'The battle of Bronkhurst Spruit and the battle of Laing's Nek have settled a number of important questions forcibly, and definitely. That, namely, the Transvaal people are in arms, and not a few "misguided men"; that they are fighting with the valour of true and brave men for their country's freedom; and that they are deserving not only of our sincere sympathy, but our highest admiration. And this we record without hesitation or consideration. No longer will it be an insult to be called a Boer, Africander, or patriot, but all who by birth or choice belong to either of these three classes will experience pride and satisfaction at belonging to a race of men who dared the power of a mighty empire in defence of their country and liberty. Alas that, according to all human calculation, they are shedding their own blood, and that of hundreds of innocent men, to no other purpose but to wipe from their name all the foul and slanderous accusations of their so-called "brother colonists," and to place on history's ineffaceable records that might was right once more, and once too often!

'Regretting deeply the valuable lives that have already been sacrificed in the unfortunate struggle, we feel satisfied with proclaiming it publicly that those entrusted with the settlement of the Transvaal question will have no peace but that bought by the ruin of the country and its people. All endeavours for a peaceable settlement have been met by them with indescribable indifference. All that could be wrung from them was that, if the Transvaal people would deliver themselves up, bound hand and foot, to their mercy, they would "consider" their case in a manner that would satisfy their "enlightened" friends. As if we had not been fed for the last three years with these idle and meaningless phrases. What then became of the promises of a Shepstone? What of the religious soft-sawder of a Frere? What may now and ever be expected?'

And what, after all, was there in this revolutionary sentiment? The honest, sober truth, nothing exaggerated, and nothing set down in malice. Remember that this same Free State, some twenty-seven years ago, was abandoned by the British in defiance of the wishes of its people, on the report of Sir George Clark, the Special Commissioner who was sent 'to ascertain whether it was practicable to make arrangements for the abandonment of the whole of that territory.' From the chosen representatives of the people he learned, as the result of his inquiry, that 'on every consideration of right, honour, and expediency, the British Government could not abandon the sovereignty.' But Sir George Clark disregarded this evidence, and, not waiting for the result of a deputation the people sent to England to protest against the act, he signed a convention with a small clique of men, guaranteeing, 'on the part of Her Majesty's Government, the future independence of the country and Government,' subject 'to confirmation and ratification by an instrument promulgated in such form and substance as Her Majesty shall approve, finally freeing them from their allegiance to the Crown, and declaring them to be, to all intents and purposes, a free and independent people.' (Such an instrument, I may note *en parenthèse*, has never been drawn.) In this matter there is evidence of the nature of the duties entrusted to Special Commissioners so far back as the year 1854 by the Government of England. Just as Sir George Clark was instructed to relieve England of a dependency which was reckoned valueless, so Sir Theophilus Shepstone was instructed to annex a country which was reckoned valuable. Both Commissioners had instructions, so as to give a colour of justice to the proceedings, to make inquiry, and ascertain the will of the people; both Commissioners acted up to the letter, not perhaps of their 'published' instructions, but certainly up to the letter of their secret orders.

It would be difficult to determine which mistake of the two—the mistake of estimating the Free State as valueless, or the mistake of estimating the Transvaal as valuable—the British Government has regretted more. Of the two blunders, the former was the greater. Had the Free State remained a British possession, the confederation of that State with Natal and the Cape Colony would long since have rendered calls upon the British taxpayer for war expenditure in this part of the world unnecessary. As there is nothing more dishonest than dishonest diplomacy, so nothing brings a greater punishment than diplomatic dishonesty to its authors. If the punishment ended with the authors of the mischief, no one could complain, but the penalty for the sin is visited on men and generations of men who have had no hand in the deceit.

Turned adrift on its own resources, and abandoned by the mighty, affluent, just, and generous parent, the sickly, puny child was left to battle with the difficulties that beset its infancy, and a severe struggle it had for life. What wonder is there that those who, dwelling in the Free State, knew the history of the Free State should scorn the unnatural parent, and become so totally estranged from it that its heart should beat in sympathy with a neighbour whose misfortune had also been that of sickness and puniness, but whose punishment had been adoption by the mighty, affluent, just, and generous nation? The sickly child, the Free State, which because of its worthlessness we abandoned in 1854, grown strong in 1881, is one of the men who help to force the parent on his bended knees. That has been England's attitude; the knee bent to what the Americans call the 'almighty dollar,' under the veil of the eleventh hour philanthropy. Through all vicissitudes President Brand pursued an even and moderate way, and South Africa ought to be thankful that in the Free State one man was found who remained loyal at heart to England, and loyal to the best interests of the people he practically ruled, though he stood almost one and alone as the advocate of peace.

When the Volksraad or Parliament of the Free State was opened at the latter end of February, the Raad passed a resolution recording its thanks to the President for his efforts on behalf of the Transvaal, and at the same time expressed its sympathy, and added to its resolution these words: 'The Volksraad points out with earnestness, and urgently gives warning of the fatal consequences which, threatening the whole of South Africa, must ensue to the European population out of the war carried on at present by the British forces against the Transvaal burghers. The whole population is mutually bound so closely together by relationship, their interests and feelings are so wholly similar, that the Volksraad of the Orange Free State, with a view to the existing circumstances of South Africa, deems it its duty to express the wish that Her Majesty and the British Government may be prepared to agree to the reasonable demands of the Transvaal burghers.'

There was in this resolution nothing calculated to cause alarm beyond the tone of veiled menace in it. The ground for apprehension was this, that the Free State, avowedly a neutral country, was engaged heart and soul on the side of the Transvaal Boers, and this in such an unmistakeable manner that no British general could much longer pretend to be blind to the fact. That Sir Evelyn Wood contemplated as a contingency not remote a rupture between the Free State and the British Government, may perhaps be inferred from the manner in which he disposed the troops under his command along the frontier of Natal adjacent to that State. At Colenso, Estcourt, Ladysmith, and the Biggarsberg he established garrisons, and, with some 4500 men at his disposal, plus the remnants of Sir George Colley's original force, he was on the eve of striking a sure and effective blow when the negotiations for peace between the belligerents were brought to a practical footing.

PART III.

THE PEACE.

CHAPTER XIX.

A LONG ARMISTICE AND ITS RESULT.

ON the 2d of March matters were indeed so far advanced towards the establishment of negotiations, that we find the British General sending the following message to President Brand:—

'FROM GENERAL WOOD, NEWCASTLE, TO PRESIDENT BRAND.

'BLOEMFONTEIN, *March* 2, 1881.

'P. Joubert requests me to send you the following telegram:—

'Your telegram received. In reply, the Government and the people of the Transvaal fully agree with you in the wish that no further blood should be shed. It is alone in the power of the English Ministry to prevent it, against whose attacks we defend ourselves. We are willing to accept every effort made by your Honour that peace may be restored, so far as it is not in direct opposition to our liberty. Will you forward your telegram at once to President Kruger?'

On the 6th March, a meeting was arranged between His Excellency and the Boers at a point half-way between the lines, the English being represented by General Wood, Major Fraser, Captain Maude, Captain Thornborough, and Captain Cropper; and the Boers by Piet Joubert, D. C. Uys, C. A. J. Joubert, and C. H. Fouchee. A. J. Forster acted as interpreter.

Avowedly the object of the meeting was to arrange an armistice to allow time for Kruger to reply to Sir George Colley's communication, and any further communication which might pass between Joubert and Sir Evelyn Wood with a view to a peaceful settlement of the questions at issue. It was mutually agreed to a cessation of all hostilities from noon of the 6th to midnight of the 14th.

The conditions were :—

1. That both parties promise not to make any forward movements from their present position, but each party retains liberty of movement within his own lines.

2. General Wood is free to send eight days' provision, but no ammunition, to the Transvaal garrisons. The Boer officers undertake to pass provisions to such garrisons.

3. Joubert undertakes to send notice of armistice conditions to respective garrisons and Boer commanders at once, and will use his influence to induce Boer commanders to allow the withdrawal of British wounded from all Transvaal garrisons into Natal.

Wagons with supplies were despatched to Potchefstrom, Standerton, and Wakkerstroom. The form of order accompanying these wagons was as follows: 'I request you to pass wagons containing rations, medical comforts, and firewood for eight days for men, as per accompanying waybill, signed by the Senior Commissariat Officer, whose honour is pledged that the amount of the rations mentioned is not exceeded. All conductors, servants, and cattle are to be considered neutral till returned within the British lines in Natal. The persons in charge are to desire the Boer leaders to pass the provisions through their lines, our people not entering within the same. It is distinctly understood that under no circumstances are warlike stores to be conveyed. The Boer officers undertake to pass provisions to such garrisons, and equally with the British garrisons to suspend all hostilities for eight days subsequent to the arrival of wagons.'

On the subject of our reinforcements, the Boers at first suggested that our troops on the road should halt. Sir Evelyn stated that he could not agree to this proposal, and pointed out that he had all his infantry around him, and that only mounted men and guns were on the road, and that their arrival was a question of but two or three days. He told the Boers he had got all the soldiers with him now with whom he intended to fight, and that was perfectly true, as the

83d, Major Barrow's Mounted Infantry, and a battery of artillery were within a day's march of Newcastle. The Boers did not press the point, and made no further suggestions, but acquiesced in our proposals.

After the mediations, at the invitation of Sir Evelyn Wood, a light champagne lunch was partaken of by both parties to the interview. The Boers, however, did not seem to relish this drinking and eating business; they accepted the invitation, but they were too thoughtful and occupied in their minds to think of quaffing champagne. As the interviews increased, and the Dutch leaders became better acquainted with our General, they relaxed their first mood, and, becoming contaminated with his good humour and cheerfulness, left some of their severe gravity up at their camp on the Nek before coming out to meet the British General, who fast advanced in favour in their eyes.

Though the armistice epoch had commenced, the preparations on our side for a final struggle were pushed on with rapidity. Sir Frederick Roberts was on his way to Natal to take the chief command. Every one was hoping that Sir Evelyn would, before the new General could arrive, bring about that happy dispatch of the Boers which was the object of our ambition. To say that the news of the armistice created disgust in military circles, would be to express in a very mild form the feelings of officers and men. Although every one felt satisfied that the armistice would lead to nothing, every one had a misgiving. As to the Boers, they had spoken through their leaders in such harsh and uncompromising tones, that there was apparently little likelihood of their giving way one inch. The language of the English press, and above all the language of Her Majesty's Ministers, had been so decided and firm as to the only course open to England, that it seemed impossible that the British could give way. The *Times*, which is generally considered the mouthpiece of the prevailing tone and temper of the nation, had, in commenting on the Laing's Nek engagement, the following remarks:—

'We are now fairly committed to a struggle which we cannot choose but carry through. The resistance of the Boers must be overcome, and the insurrection must be put down, at whatever cost. There can be no two opinions thus far. As for any notion that we shall be dispirited at the somewhat unexpected difficulty of the task before us, and that we shall turn back from it at the first check, we need not waste words in talking about it. The danger rather is that the combative spirit of the country will be unduly roused, and that we shall fling ourselves into the miserable war with an eagerness and determination out of all proportion to the possible value of the results. The end is the great matter, and the country is thoroughly determined what the end of the Transvaal war shall be.'

And again: 'The time will come when all that the Boers will have to urge will be listened to, and will have due weight attached to it. But it is idle for the present to talk of terms. There can be no terms until our military disasters have been retrieved, and until the British authority has been restored over the Transvaal. It is to this task that the country has now committed itself. We shall show by deeds as well as by words that we know what we are engaged upon, and that we are fully determined to carry it through. If the regiments already on their way to the front are not sufficient to ensure military success, more will be sent.'

Take a speech made by Lord Kimberley at Manchester about the same date, or even later. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, referring to the Boer war, said: 'As far as South Africa is concerned, the Liberal Government had forced upon them the conduct of a war which they deeply regretted, but for which they were not primarily responsible, but which was necessary in order to vindicate the authority of the Crown. Much as they deplored the necessity, they would not flinch from the necessity which had been forced upon them by the policy of their predecessors in office; but, at the same time, they would, as soon as the authority of the Crown had been vindicated, take such steps as would, he hoped, lead to the creation of free institutions in Africa, and institutions of which it could not be said that they had been forced on an unwilling people.'

There is the same old cry, promises of 'free institutions'; the vindication of the authority of the Crown first, the free institutions afterwards. I do not think there was one civilian, let alone a military man, in South Africa who at this time anticipated the result of the parleys which now commenced.

An order having been issued for the withdrawal of the survivors of the 58th Regiment from the front to recruit their shattered ranks, some rumours immediately circulated that the gallant 58th was being placed under the ban of the General's displeasure. How much truth there was in that report might be ascertained from His Excellency's address to the regiment at Newcastle on the 8th March, prior to its departure for stations between that town and the Mooi River. The General said he had heard rumours were flying about to the effect that because the regiment was withdrawn from the front, and that in place of rifles they were to be armed with carbines, it was meant as a reflection on the conduct of the men at Majuba. There was no foundation for such mischievous tales, and from the evidence laid before him he should feel proud to belong to the 58th. It was admitted by military authorities in all parts of the world, it was advisable when a regiment had lost so heavily as had the 58th, that it should be withdrawn from the scene of conflict to recruit, rather than that it should further bear the brunt of battle. The sole reason that carbines had been given to the men instead of rifles was, that the latter were required at the front to hold the bayonet, whilst carbines would equally well answer the purpose required of the 58th now.

Such an incident as this would hardly be worth recording, were it not valuable as an indication of the disagreeable feeling that the affair of the Majuba had created at the front.

Another incident of the armistice was a visit by Lady Colley to her husband's grave. Mrs. Montague accompanied the bereaved wife. A miserable journey they must have had from Pietermaritzburg, what with the rain and flooded rivers; indeed, at the Ingogo the ladies had a narrow escape from being thrown into the river. They were the first ladies seen at Mount Prospect, but naturally the strictest privacy was maintained, a guard being put over the graveyard during the sad moments that Lady Colley mourned and prayed at the tomb of her gallant consort. Mrs. Montague visited the hospital lines, and spoke to many of the poor sufferers there, and there were still many who could not be removed to the base hospital, although every opportunity was seized for conveying the wounded to Newcastle.

The ground on which the tents were pitched was becoming very unwholesome, and not a little anxiety was felt on account of the patients. Amongst those who were unhurt, dysentery was beginning to prevail to a considerable extent; hard work and damp ground were telling on the strongest constitutions.

On the 14th March there was another meeting of the rival leaders, and the armistice was extended for four days longer, as

Paul Kruger had been unable to arrive at the Nek in time for the meeting, and Sir Evelyn Wood was expecting a telegram of instructions from London which had not come to hand. On the 16th a third interview took place, and at one o'clock in the day, or three hours after the commencement of the meeting, Sir Evelyn stated to the correspondents: 'We are no nearer peace than ever we were, and unless the Boers moderate their tone, the negotiations will come to nothing.'

At seven o'clock in the evening, His Excellency announced that the Boers had agreed to accept to a great extent the general propositions of the British Government, reserving, however, one or two points for consideration. It seems Paul Kruger, who was at this meeting, held our persistently for the withdrawal of the British troops in the Transvaal as an indispensable condition of peace, and it was at this interview that the General promised, if the Boers dispersed, not to follow them up or operate against them.

We were beginning to get heartily tired of these negotiations. The Nek, as seen from the spot where the tents were pitched, midway between our lines and those of the enemy, had long since lost any interest. The Boers who came and conversed with us were no longer objects of curiosity, or their conversation entertaining. On the 18th, General Wood, Colonel Buller, and staff met General Joubert and his brother at O'Neill's farm to discuss the terms which the Boer leaders were unable to agree to at the last meeting. Kruger was too ill to be present, and Dr. Jorissen was also absent. The points which the Boers were at difference with General Wood about, were in regard to the formation of the Peace Commission. They wanted to be more directly represented on it than the English Government was willing to allow, and objected to the presence of our troops in the Transvaal.

This meeting would have been held on the previous day, but the non-receipt of a telegram from England prevented it. About ten o'clock the expected message arrived, and it was sent to General Wood's quarters, about two miles from the camp, he having occupied a house used as a roadside inn.

Arrangements were made for a meeting to take place during the afternoon. At the close of the interview, which lasted about three hours, General Wood called up the press representatives, and informed them that a telegram had been received from Lord Kimberley, containing an answer to the requests of the Boers, and Lord

Kimberley had been unable to accede to the requests. Joubert had then asked for a prolongation of the armistice for three days, to enable the Boers to avail themselves of the advice of President Brand as to the attitude they should assume; also that they might consider Lord Kimberley's message further. General Wood and General Joubert had a discussion respecting the provisioning of garrisons. Joubert held that the word 'garrison' included only soldiers; Wood maintained it included every one. It was agreed that Mr. Brand should settle the point in dispute as soon as he arrived.

President Brand, at the invitation of the British Government, was about to attend the conferences between the rival parties: but for the delays occasioned by bad roads, he would have been present at this meeting. The question about this time was raised, 'What is the Transvaal?' As soon as the determination was come to by the British Government to surrender the country they had annexed, that Government entertained a doubt as to what constituted the Transvaal. Dr. Jorissen, one of the shrewdest advisers of the Boers, gave a very good answer to this question by saying, 'The Transvaal is the country which you took from the Boers: the territory which the Republic governed before the annexation, that is the Transvaal.' Our contention was that the Transvaal was that domain north of the Vaal River, but such an argument would not hold good for a moment, or the whole of the land lying between the Coldstream and the Vaal River would have been another No-Man's-Land.

O'Neill's farmhouse, as a shelter for those taking part in the conferences, was an improvement upon the open veldt; but what a miserable, wretched place it was at best! Its floors of the bare earth trampled into mud, its darkness and desolation, were depressing to the last degree. The day of this meeting of the 18th March was bitterly cold, with a driving rain, which pierced to the very marrow, defying thick clothing, mackintoshes, blankets, or any other wrappings. It was necessary to ride right in the teeth of it to go from Mount Prospect to the little farmhouse lying right under the Majuba, and for a horse it was cruel work. (That night we lost over fifty animals from cold.) Four small sticks in a very large fireplace distributed all the warmth we could muster in the kitchen, whilst waiting the result of the interview in the next room. After shivering there for several hours, we learnt that an extension of the armistice was the result; but now we gathered further that the signing of peace would almost certainly follow the next interview, and that 'everything was to be left to a Royal Commission.'

It was about this time that Joubert gave evidence of the bitter feeling he had against those in the Transvaal called 'loyals,' who were under arms against the Boers. He told Sir Evelyn Wood he would rather shoot twenty civilians than one soldier. Our General having been informed that a number of Boer youths in the enemy's ranks had pledged themselves to pick him off in the first fight that took place, he mentioned the matter in a jocular way to the Boer leaders; and they agreed that the report was true.

The final and decisive interview between Sir Evelyn Wood and the representatives of the enemy was held at O'Neill's farm on 23d March. After sitting all day, the conference broke up. All that Sir Evelyn Wood could communicate to the representatives of the press, at 5.30 P.M., was, that the terms of peace had been agreed on, and that the Boers were to leave the Nek the following day.

His Excellency, in answer to the amazed looks, said no doubt that evening questions as to details would be put and answered in the Houses of Parliament. More than this he did not add, beyond dropping the remark that it was not of his doing.

It must be once and for all understood that in these negotiations Sir Evelyn Wood (and I have it on the best authority) had absolutely nothing to do beyond communicating the proposals, and carrying out the argument by means of his voice, of the English Government; having to obey orders, however distasteful, he obeyed them with a soldier's alacrity; and having to perform a disagreeable task, he completed the duty by bringing all his intelligence and *savoir faire* to bear on the subject. The Boer leaders fell in love with him from the very first, and did not conceal their admiration of the man who was firm as a rock up to the utmost limit allowed him; and who was at the same time courteous, affable, good-natured, and entertaining.

The memorandum which the Boer leaders made of these last two meetings is furnished in the following translation:—

'REPORT OF A MEETING AT O'NEILL'S FARM ON 21st MARCH 1881.

'Present: Sir E. Wood, Majors Clarke and Fraser, and staff of the one side; and Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, P. Joubert, Jorissen, Dirk Uys, C. Joubert, and Maré of the other side.

'At the meetings on the 6th, 14th, and 16th March 1881, between Sir E. Wood and the Boer leaders, it was agreed to enter into an armistice, whereupon the Boer leaders generally accepted the terms laid down in Lord Kimberley's telegrams of the 8th and 12th March, as were communicated by Sir E. Wood, excepting the two points objected to: (1) Direct representation in the Royal Commission; (2) the expressing of a hope that the English garrisons in the Transvaal should be withdrawn when they dispersed.

'In their desire for peace, the Boer leaders have since withdrawn these two points, when the following were agreed to:—

'*Schedule I.*—I, Sir E. Wood, accept the Boer leaders, Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, Joubert, and others who were present at the meeting, as the lawful representatives of the people of the Transvaal, now under arms.

'*Schedule II.*—We, Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert, declare ourselves prepared to accept the reigning Sovereign of Great Britain and Ireland as suzerain, after the manner explained by Sir E. Wood, and noted down in the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March. We likewise accept to acknowledge a British Resident in the future capital of the Government, with such functions as the British Government may decide, on the recommendation (or award?) of the Royal Commission. We also agree to leave to the Commission the consideration of providing for the protection of interested natives, and boundary questions (relating to) joining the possessions of any foreign power (or state), must be reserved for the suzerain.

'*Schedule III.*—I, Sir E. Wood, acknowledge the right of the Transvaal people to their entire own (self) government, subject to suzerain's rights.

'*Schedule IV.*—We, Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert, shall with pleasure co-operate with Her Majesty's Government to punish those who have committed such deeds, or who are directly responsible for such, as are against the laws of civilised warfare.

'*Schedule V.*—I, Sir E. Wood, in the event of the position at Laing's Nek being evacuated by the Boers, and that they disperse to their homes, declare, in the name of Her Majesty's Government, that I will not take possession of the position, nor follow them up with troops, or send ammunition into the Transvaal. At a meeting on the 18th March, a telegram from Lord Kimberley, dated 17th March, addressed to the Boer representatives, was handed over, being a reply to Sir E. Wood's telegram of 16th March, containing the points objected to by them on that day.

'*Schedule VI.*—The Boer leaders accept the terms offered in the telegram of the 17th March. They declare: "We trust that the British Government will entirely give us our own Government so soon as possible, and at the longest within six months, with this understanding, that no civil action shall be instituted with regard to actions (deeds) done during the war or relating thereto. And likewise no action shall be instituted with regard to taxes until the own (self) government has been restored.

'"We further trust that, should the Royal Commission deem it necessary to cut off any territory to the eastward of the 30th degree longitude, such Commission shall not order or advise more territory to be ceded than may be required to meet the demands of the English policy as set forth in the telegram of the 17th of March."

'*Schedule VII.*—I, Sir E. Wood, undertake, in the name of the British Government, that the Royal Commission shall sit as soon as possible, and that the Government of the country shall be given back within six months from this date.

'*Schedule VIII.*—Under these circumstances or conditions, we agree, on behalf of the Boers under arms, immediately to disperse our forces, and to await the decision of pending questions that are handed over to the Royal Commission. After the completion of their work, the country will receive the promised self-government.

'*Schedule IX.*—We, Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert, undertake, in the name of the Boers, to give back all British properties now in possession of the Boer authorities, and taken during the war.

'And Sir Evelyn Wood agrees to give back all property belonging to the Boers, now in possession of the British Government, taken during the war, or taken over from the Republic at the time of the annexation; the exchange to take place when the own government has been ultimately sanctioned.

'E. Wood, General, High Commissioner.
'S. J. P. Kruger.
'M. W. Pretorius.
'P. J. Joubert.'

'O'NEILL'S FARM, 1 P.M., *March* 23, 1881.

'Present: Sir Evelyn Wood, Majors Fraser and Clarke, Lieutenant Hamilton, and Mr. Thornbrugh Cropper (?), aides-de-camp; and from the Boer side, Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, P. Joubert, C. Joubert, Jorissen, and Maré.

'Sir Evelyn Wood stated that the latest was, he had received power to ratify the preliminary treaty entered into on the 21st ult. Sir Evelyn Wood remarked that Lord Kimberley telegraphed, "It was difficult for him to understand the real meaning of his (Sir Evelyn Wood's) telegram of the 21st, after the words 'at the longest within six months.'" Wherefore Sir Evelyn Wood, to prevent future misunderstanding, that, whereas the British Government has guaranteed immunity (or to exempt) from civil prosecution of any actions (or deeds) done during the present war, or relating to it, alike to the leaders personally, collectively, and individually, or to all those who acted under their orders, the Boer leaders, Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert, should on their side agree, that to the Royal Commission must be left all questions for indemnification or other affairs on either side, in so far as the Commission may consider (or decide) such acts to have been justifiable to the wants of the war, and are reasonably justified to be indemnified. With regard to the provisions made for civil actions, it is naturally understood that nobody shall be troubled (or interfered with) on either side, on account of political thoughts or deeds relating to the war.

'Since the meeting of 21st March, it has been brought to Sir Evelyn Wood's notice that the arms taken over at the annexation have been hostilely (*feitelijk*) paid for (*i.e.* taken since by chances of war).

'To prevent further discussion for the present, it is agreed to modify Schedule 9 (nine) in so far as relates to arms taken at the annexation by the British Government; be they serviceable or unserviceable, they must be handed over when entire self-government is sanctioned.

'And further, that the bringing in order of any money indemnity that may have been paid for them by the British Government at the annexation must be left to the decision (or consideration) of the Commission. With these exceptions, Sir Evelyn Wood herewith ratified the terms of agreement entered into on the 21st March, and he and the Boer leaders affixed their names hereto as a proof of their ratifying the same.

'E. Wood, Major-General and
Acting High Commissioner.
'S. J. P. Kruger.
'M. W. Pretorius.
'P. J. Joubert.
'C. J. Joubert.
'C. J. P. Jorissen.
'J. P. Maré.'

The Colonial Government of Natal gave, some few days after the event, a *précis* of the terms of peace, which I append:—

'1. The Transvaal is to be subject to suzerain rights of Great Britain.

'2. Is to have entire self-government as regards its interior affairs. But in respect to frontier affairs, control over foreign relations is reserved to the Suzerain.

'3. In the principle of suzerainty is also included the right of moving troops through the country in time of war.

'4. The transfer of government will be carried out within a period of six months at the latest.

'5. With a view to separating the Transvaal from the great native districts lying to the east, the determination of the easterly boundaries of the future territory will form part of the work of a Royal Commission, which will assemble at once.

'6. This Commission will also take into consideration measures for the protection of natives interested.

'7. Until the report of the Royal Commission is approved by Her Majesty's Government, the Transvaal will remain under British rule.

'8. A British Resident, with such functions as may hereafter be approved, will be located at the future capital of the Transvaal Government.

'9. Her Majesty's Government guarantees to the Boer leaders, individually and collectively, and to those acting under their orders, immunity from civil process for acts done in reference to the war until self-government is accorded.

'10. The question of compensation to either side for acts not justified by necessities of war, is to be remitted to the Royal Commission, which is to judge as to what acts come within the meaning of justification. There shall be no molestation for political opinion or action on either side.

'11. The Boer leaders engage to co-operate with Her Majesty's Government in bringing to justice those who have committed, or are directly responsible for, acts contrary to the rules of civilised warfare.'

The Boer leaders appeared well pleased at the termination of the negotiations. Coming out of O'Neill's house, the first remark one of their number made to some of our officers standing by was, 'Now you can have a look at the Nek.' Joubert, however, advised no one to go up there till after the following day, as he said, if his men had not all left with their wagons, there might be quarrels. To those who were anxious to go into the Transvaal at once, he gave the advice to wait a day or two till he could send and advise his people of peace being made.

Some of the Boers, after the conference, spoke disparagingly of our soldiers, saying they could not shoot a bit, and thought our defence of the Majuba a very poor one.

When we arrived at our camp with the brief news, 'Peace is made,' I think I never heard before from any assemblage of men stronger language than that which circulated through Mount Prospect. 'A miserable ending to a miserable war,' was the universal verdict. Military men consoled themselves with the reflection—grasping like drowning men at a floating straw—that the Gladstone Government would be turned out neck and crop that evening the moment the news was received in the House of Commons, and that the war would be renewed. There must be another fight. At any rate there would be a fight about the districts of Leydenburg, Middleburg, Wakkerstroom, and Utrecht, which the British Government meant to retain; so the rumour went at that time, and rumour for once was true as regards the intentions of the Cabinet.

If the British soldier was disgusted, I believe a large majority of the Boer soldiers were more then disgusted. Joubert attempted to address them on the following day, but he had a very small audience. As soon as it was known that it was peace, the camp at the Nek was deserted by hundreds the same evening, and this gave the Dutch General great offence. When Joubert spoke, before giving the word 'Huistoo,' many of his hearers turned their backs on him, an unmistakeable sign of contempt. He did not pretend to communicate to them the terms of peace, only the bare condition that a Royal Commission was to settle everything. About the retention by the British of the districts I have named, he was silent, and it was well he did not refer to that matter. It was indeed nearly a month later before the Boers gained an inkling of that reservation, and immediately it called forth a solemn and serious warning from the people as to the peril of such a stipulation, if sought to be implemented.

CHAPTER XX.

LAING'S NEK DESERTED.

SIR EVELYN WOOD and his staff were visitors to the Nek on the day that the Boer force were to evacuate the famous position. A cursory inspection of the ground that our enemy had so successfully held, revealed the fact that if they had not left the spot very soon, fever or some virulent disease would have done what our force had failed to accomplish. The place stank. Offal, rubbish, filth, and every abomination, lay on the surface of the veldt; grass there was none; the trampling of many feet and the browsing of cattle had made the site bare and brown. In two long files the Boers, at a given signal, started for home, taking the road to Coldstream, there to be formally disbanded. There had been many lady visitors to the Nek and to the Majuba Hill during the armistice, and they found seats in the wagons when the trek homewards began. In three hours' time, from the period of starting, there was not a Boer within sight of any one standing on that ridge, which for long had been the object of our ambition.

The fortifications raised by the Boers were of the rudest description. On the sky-line, as presented to the eye from the Mount Prospect side, a rough rampart of stones had been run across the Nek, the height to which this shelter was raised being barely sufficient to afford cover to a man lying down. Behind that line, some twenty yards back, was a sod-bank and ditch; the ditch facing our line of approach, and the bank behind the ditch. This defence trench was not more than 200 yards long, not even extended halfway up the horns of the crescent illustrated by the character U. The inner angle of this letter U may be taken as representing the point over which the course of the road lay; the Majuba on the left hand, and high ground on the right, representing the upright strokes of the character. Round to the right (or the extreme left of the Boers), overlooking the Buffalo River, a sod-bank and ditch —it could be called nothing else—were found where the Mounted Squadron had attempted to charge on the day of the first fight. This defence was set well back down the incline of the hill, away from the line of sight of any opponent storming the hill. Arrived at a certain point, any attacking party gaining the ridge of the hill would be exposed on a sky-line to the Boers behind this sod-bank, some fifty yards below, and would offer a conspicuous mark for their unerring rifles. The earth on the reverse side of the sod-bank was thrown up as a backing, sloping from the top to the base, and offering a suitable incline for riflemen to lie on. Artillery, from the plateau below, might fire all day at such a position without hitting a single man or touching the earthwork of the enemy. Against cavalry the earthwork would be equally well protected, because no horse could jump the ditch and rise safely to the top of the wall beyond in the same stride. It has been said that the Boer line of defence was too extended to be a good one. That may be; but this is certain, that if the Boers had abandoned any of the ground they held on their right or left flank, we, by occupying the vacant ground, could have dragged guns up which would have commanded the back of the Nek, as well as the slope fronting it, and could have therefore driven the enemy out of the positions they held without their having the shadow of a chance of resistance. As long as they kept the high ground, our artillery was of no use, comparatively speaking.

Visiting the Majuba Hill, it was found that the Boers had not turned a single sod or moved a single stone there. Evidently they were perfectly well satisfied with its natural strength, when once they gained possession of it. Measuring the distance from where our last stand was made to where the Boers lay when they poured in a fire which by military critics has been described as the hottest known, and which certainly was the most accurate and deadly, I found that it was forty paces distant. There remained abundant evidence of the recent fight in the shape of odds and ends, bandages, lint, helmets, torn pieces of soldiers' clothing, etc. A very superficial search made on any of the slopes of the hill discovered fragments of the hundredweights of lead that the Boers had discharged at us during the attack. One large grave contained the bodies of all our victims save Captain Maude, who had been buried in a separate tomb close by. A rough cairn of loose stones, raised some six feet from the ground, marked the spot where the body of the deceased General lay.

Of visitors to the hill from our camp there were swarms. Every man who could get leave went up the Majuba, and some very strong opinions were expressed by officers, who, standing on the summit, could see what the respective positions of the contending forces had been. As regards the side on which the Boers came up, it was just possible to ride to the summit of the hill; but a merciful man would rather walk than force his horse to carry him up such an incline. By leading, however, the task was not a difficult one to get a horse up, as the Boers had trodden down the grass going to and fro, and the paths were distinct and clear of any such obstacles in the way of rocks or boulders. The places affording cover, where the Boers had taken shelter, and kept up from long ranges fire on our position on the crest, were easily discovered by the empty cartridge cases which strewed the ground.

There is not much to add respecting the scene of operations at Laing's Nek or Mount Prospect. At the latter place were left the 3d-60th, a battery of artillery, and Major Barrow's troop of Mounted Infantry, which had arrived only in time to hear that peace was proclaimed. The site of the camp was shifted for hygienic reasons, and the old camping-ground left to air itself. Fatigue parties were told off to build walls round the many graveyards. Englishmen who had been kept prisoners in the Transvaal came over the Nek by twos and threes, Dutchmen began to trek in with their wagons loaded with wool or other produce, and merchandise from Natal for the Transvaal was carried over the border in large quantities, increasing daily.

Intending to visit some of the towns in the Transvaal, I waited for several days, hoping that the post-cart would be run bi-weekly as before the war, because it had been announced that the mail service would be reinstituted forthwith. But the contractor's horses had nearly all been stolen or commandeered; it was doubtful what provision, if any, could be found at any stage on the route, and the idea of a regular mail service seemed farther off every day. After losing three or four days by waiting, I started for Pretoria on horseback, leading a spare horse for company, and trusting to luck to find accommodation on the road.

PART IV.

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE TRANSVAAL.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SIEGE OF STANDERTON.

FOR a narrative of the sieges of the various towns held by us during the war, and incidents connected with my visit to the Transvaal, I cannot do better than reproduce the periodical accounts I wrote during my journey, because they give as fair an impression as could be gathered of the state and feeling of the people of the country at that time, when only a part of the truth was known, and every one was in a state of suspense and uncertainty. I will therefore give the letters as written, beginning with one as follows, indited at Standerton, the first town visited, which I reached on the 30th March :—

Though O'Neill's farm at the foot of the Majuba is abandoned by the Boer and English debaters, and though the Nek no longer is forbidden ground to the curious Englishman, I do not think that the peace we now enjoy has allayed the misgivings with which the negotiations were regarded from the first, because as yet no one seems to know what the terms of peace are. If some grand military manœuvre had been the order of the day, the success of which depended on no one but the originator possessing information about it, greater secrecy could not have been maintained. Surely there is something about this business which will hardly bear criticism, or the public would be fully informed of an issue so important as that of the 23d March. It is 'doing good by stealth' with a vengeance. The blush which should follow the publication of the matter has, I suppose, yet to be seen. That there will be a palpable blush in more quarters than one I do not doubt, remembering the emphatic utterances of statesmen of late respecting the Transvaal, and especially the vigorous and decided statement of Sir Garnet Wolseley, that so long as the tail of the British lion wagged, the Transvaal would remain British territory—or words to that effect; I forget the precise idiom used by His Excellency the then Administrator of the Transvaal. I say this on the supposition always that the Transvaal, wholly or in part, is given back to its former owners. That part is to be given back I cannot doubt; and when one hears of the 30th degree of longitude as the line of demarcation between British and Republican soil (the British taking the ground east of that line), it looks as much like British policy as anything I know. The object ostensibly is that we should intervene between the Boers and 'our poor dear black brethren,' in this instance the Swazies. Unfortunate it is for the South African Republic that we cannot carry out our humane intentions without coming between Republican territory and the seaboard. Here in the Transvaal this idea of the 30th degree as a boundary line is not believed in; nineteen out of every twenty Dutchmen or English residents who sympathize with the Boers, will tell you that the Transvaal, lock, stock, and barrel, is ceded to the South African Republic, and the twentieth man will tell you that the terms of the Sand River Convention are to be observed. I do not know what are the terms of that treaty, except roughly that in it the Vaal River is prescribed as the boundary of the Transvaal.

If reticence had been observed on the English side in giving information as to the terms of the peace, there had been equal reticence on the other; and at this moment I do not believe there are a dozen Boers who know the true state of affairs. As regards His Excellency Sir Evelyn Wood, it must not be imagined for a moment that the secrecy is of his will. All information that he could give he has given to the representatives of the press, who had been dogging his footsteps for a fortnight or more.

In Standerton those Englishmen who are thoughtful observers of events, and who are waiting patiently for some act of political honesty before they will believe that such a thing exists, have come to the conclusion that the present state of affairs is the outcome of political shift. It may be that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would like to show a surplus next Budget night; it may be that, for the cohesion of the Liberal party, the Right Honourable John Bright and his particular following must be conciliated; many theories are advanced save one—that the British Government desire to do justice to the Transvaal. Men say if the Royal Commission is to be composed solely of Sir Hercules Robinson, Sir Evelyn Wood, and Chief-Justice De Villiers, that is not treating the Boers fairly, because the Boers will not be represented on the Commission; if the 30th degree is to be the boundary line, that is not doing even-handed justice to the Boers, because the Boers ought to have a free road to the seaboard. In truth, whatever may be the terms, neither Dutchman nor Englishman would be surprised to see blood shed again within a short period of the publication of the terms.

The prevailing idea in this district is that the present peace is not the outcome of any desire on the part of English statesmen to do justice to the Boers, but because England feared the Free State would openly proclaim for their brethren in the Transvaal, and that the Dutch inhabitants of the Cape Colony and those in Natal would also join the enemy's standard. This idea may be considered as very wild and Utopian, but I am not at all sure, from information which reaches me from the Free State, that, so far as the Dutch population of that country is concerned, any such complexion can be given to the theory. As regards the Cape Colony and Natal, I do not know the feeling there.

I have often been asked, 'If the English are actuated by a desire to do what is right to the Boers, why did not those motives impel them to inquire into the merits of the case before to-day? Why did you try to shoot us, and then argue the case on its merits?' The only answer is, We could not 'take' the Transvaal without a great expenditure, so we have decided to adopt a generous course and allow the Boers to 'keep' it. If we could have retaken it with as little trouble and expense as Sir Theophilus Shepstone annexed it, it would be ours to-day, and Boer arguments scattered to the four winds.

Before leaving Mount Prospect, I witnessed the departure of the troops—the 97th, who had only arrived two or three days before; the 92d Highlanders, who, save the three companies engaged on the 27th February, had taken no part in the campaign; and the Naval Brigade. This marching of troops to the rear who had so recently come up eager for the fray, reminded one of the lines, recording the exploits of

'That brave old Duke of York,
Who had ten thousand men;
He marched them up a hill,
And marched them down again';

or a couplet to that effect, the precise wording of which my memory will not bind me to. That there is a stipulation that the British shall not advance over the Nek I think is possible, for this reason: it was necessary to shift the site of the camp at Mount Prospect, and that was done last Sunday. It is as easy really to shift a camp and all its equipments four miles as half a mile, and had we liberty to cross Laing's Nek, I should imagine our camp would have been moved to that spot instead of one mile only to our right front. When I left on the 28th inst., Colonel Ashburnham of the 60th Rifles was in command, with Major Hart as staff officer. Surgeon-Major Babbington, with a couple of assistants, was caring for the wounded with that assiduity which has made him remarkable.

On my way to Mr. Walker's place, fifteen miles this side of the Nek, I learnt from Mr. Johnston, who has a farm on the border, that the Boers had not done much damage to his house. They had helped themselves to necessaries, including wood-work fit for making coffins. Some of his sheep and horses were missing, the latter having been seen in the hands of the Boers. At an adjoining farm, that of Mr. Tom Minter, a very different state of things was revealed to the owner when he visited the place. Here the damage had been wilful, and one act of the Boers hardly admits of excuse. Mr. Minter had left in his house a tombstone, on which was recorded the death of one of his children; when he went to the house on the 28th, the stone had been removed, taken away no one knew where. So sacred an object to a bereaved man, so useless an object to the Boers, might have been left alone.

Unfortunately he had incurred the displeasure of the Boers, and this was the nature of their revenge. At Walker's the Boers had all along behaved very well. He has a store and canteen combined, and whatever the Boers wanted they paid for, and behaved civilly to the proprietor and his family from first to last. When they trekked past from the Nek, homeward bound, every man seemed anxious to take some present for his wife or daughters, and trade with Mr. Walker was brisk. His stock of liquors was consumed early in the campaign, all in fact except some few bottles of champagne, the price of which was rather out of range of the Boers' pockets; but when the Boers went home there were certain men among them extravagant enough to purchase the bottles which temptingly had remained so long untouched on the shelves.

At Meek's place, a few miles farther on, I heard that Mr. Hutchinson and Dr. Merenski were located, attending to a wounded man. I therefore went off the direct road to Standerton to visit the place. From information I picked up from Mr. Hutchinson (late of Utrecht) at Meek's place, and from other sources, I have come to the conclusion that the Boer statement of their losses at the Majuba fight is substantially correct, and I understand that the Boers account for it partly in this way: they say many of the rifles they picked up on the Majuba were sighted at 500 yards. I have already said that, from the spot where our last stand was made on the Majuba facing the Boers to their position, the distance is not more than forty yards. If it is true that our men, when shoulder to shoulder at the koppie, fired volleys with rifles sighted at 500 yards, the reason of the Boer loss being so small is not difficult to arrive at.

Mr. Hutchinson was evidently under the impression that the property of any man, English or Dutch, who had seen fit to fly the country at the outbreak of the war, was to be confiscated to the Republic. He and Mrs. Hutchinson had been attending the Boer wounded during the latter part of the campaign, and had received permission from the Republic to occupy the house they were then in as long as they liked. Outside the house the red-cross flag was flying. Around were a few trees, a stone enclosure, somewhat dilapidated, and a luxurious rank vegetation. These were the only signs of civilisation, save a spider in which Mr. Hutchinson drove to the place from Utrecht, after obtaining permission from Sir George Colley to attend to the Boer wounded. At this place I received news that 'the whole of the Transvaal was delivered up to the South African Republic.' Crossing a stream 100 yards distant from the house where Mr. Hutchinson was located, is another house of more pretentious dimensions, with large out-buildings. Here I met the Rev. Mr. Merenski, a missionary, and whilst in conversation with him, a gentleman, who was introduced as either a Boer commandant or a veldt cornet, inquired what my destination was, and whether I had a pass. I said I was not aware that any pass was necessary, as I understood that any one unarmed was allowed to go into the country. To this he assented, and after an exchange of courtesies with those who were around,—some half-dozen Boers,—I struck for the main road again.

With thirty miles to traverse between Meek's and Franklyn's (the first halting-place), over soft marshy ground, and uncertain as to striking the road, I wished my next stage were completed, especially as it was getting late in the day, and rain threatened to fall. After going some fifteen miles, I was fortunate in coming up with Mr. Hutchinson of Natal, who was trekking with his wagons to Standerton, and he made me comfortable for the night. The roads from this point to Franklyn's, indeed right on to Standerton, are very good on the whole, though the monotony of the never-ending flat ground, which is the characteristic of this district of the Transvaal, makes travelling anything but exciting work. At Franklyn's store the Boers had behaved very well, paying for everything, and comporting themselves with decorum. Here provisions were not scarce, except breadstuffs and alcoholic beverages, which had long since been consumed. Here, for the first time along the road, you get a sight of telegraph poles standing. The wire, however, had been carefully removed and neatly rolled up in coils convenient for transport. Between Mount Prospect and Standerton I met three or four wagons—two carrying wool, driven by a Dutchman; the others our Government wagons returning empty to Newcastle. The only other persons I saw were two or three horsemen riding across the veldt, who did not come within speaking distance. As I approached Standerton, a mile or more distant, I passed a large well-made laager, loopholed in a way which made me think it was the work of our troops; at the same time it struck me the position held by the Standerton garrison was rather an extended one. In the distance the town on the other side of the Vaal River, with large open spaces between each house, looked picturesque. The buildings for the most part being constructed of dark stone with white facings showed out well on the green slope, a pleasant relief to the eye after miles and miles of brown sunburnt veldt. The absence of trees alone prevents Standerton being called a pretty place. Inquiring for an hotel, a building, with sand-bags where glass generally is found in windows, was pointed out to me; the place was nothing but a shell, no one inside, and 'that is the only hotel in Standerton.' I began to think Standerton was not such a picturesque spot after all, especially when I noticed several houses deserted, but barricaded and loopholed, and in other directions the ruins of houses which had been levelled to the ground. I was at last fortunate in meeting an excellent citizen, Mr. Van Hasselt, who offered me accommodation, and once more I changed my opinion, and thought Standerton a picturesque, pretty, and indeed charming spot.

How well it had held its own against the enemy is a cheering story. Every one seemed in good spirits. The stock of provisions here had been low, and half rations only served out to the inhabitants for some time past, and soldiers and civilians alike had had constant spells at military duty for nearly three months, while communication with the world outside was entirely severed. Yet every one was contented save with the terms of peace.

Briefly, the history of the siege of Standerton is as follows:—On the 21st of December 1880, Captain Froom came from Wakkerstroom with two companies of the 94th and one of the 58th Regiments, and began to fortify the place. On the 24th of December, Major Montague, arriving from Maritzburg, took command, and Standerton was soon put in a state of defence which defied the utmost efforts of the enemy. Three forts were built on koppies round the town; two outworks were constructed, besides breastworks, rifle-pits, etc. The site of the military camp is near a high koppie called Stander's Koppie, north-north-west of the town. Fort Alice is the name of the fort proper—though, strictly speaking, there was no fort prior to the outbreak of hostilities, unless a few unfinished stone storehouses can be dignified by the name. Stander's Koppie is, roughly speaking, 2300 yards from Fort Alice, and the centre of the town is about 800 yards north-east of the fort. The Vaal River, which for long periods was in a flooded state, formed a natural protection south of the town and camp. In the town itself, as I have already said, houses interfering with the line of fire were pulled down. Other buildings in suitable positions were barricaded and loopholed; rifle-pits and small shelter trenches were dug. On Graveyard Koppie was placed a fort; and I may here remark of all the forts that their construction reflects great credit on the engineer or designer. They are not only strong, but constructed with a view to the comfort of the men who had to spend so many weary hours in them. The hospital, a strong stone building at Fort Alice, is the one most sheltered by nature from the fire of any enemy outside the limits of the town. At the outset of the siege

Major Montague was forced to resort to the cat once or twice; in fact, the strictest discipline amongst the men, and the most implicit obedience of all, without distinction, to the Commander, were necessary if the place was to be held by the small force available—350 regulars and about 70 civilians. Only one or two examples were required with the lash on soldiers who were guilty of misconduct before everything worked very smoothly; the few men of doubtful character there were amongst the soldiers, finding that Major Montague was not an officer to be trifled with, behaved in an exemplary manner thereafter. The officers of the 94th comprised Captains Froom and Campion, Lieutenants Davidson and Massey, 2d Lieutenants Swan (acting adjutant) and MacLaughlin. Lieutenant Compton was the only officer of the 58th. Surgeons-Major Parkinson and Fraser, and Surgeon Lloyd, comprised the medical staff. In command of the Volunteers and Mounted Infantry was Conductor Cassell of the Commissariat and Transport Staff, and the Irregular Foot were in charge of Lieutenant Grant (civilian). The ground and positions were surveyed and sketched by 2d Lieutenant MacLaughlin, distances measured off, and every possible preparation made for a struggle. Martial law was proclaimed after a meeting of the inhabitants of the town had been held, at the summons of Major Montague, when all who desired to leave the town were told they might do so if they preferred that to bearing arms against the enemy. This was on the 25th of December, but at that time it was known that the Boers were near, and consequently some, who because of their political opinions had felt disinclined to fight against the Boers, elected to remain and cast in their lot with the combatants on the English side. One hundred men under Captain Campion occupied the town, round which, at places where the Boers could make a charge, wire entanglements were put up. The Dutch Reformed Church, standing in the centre of the town, was mined, and connected with the court-house and post-office by electric wire. These places were again connected with the camp, where a battery, by means of which the charges could be exploded, was kept. Of gunpowder there was very little to be got; of dynamite none, though several efforts were made to obtain it. Owing to the scarcity of these explosives, the various outworks could not be mined. One strong building was set apart for the accommodation of the female population, numbering a score or more. Long before all these preparations were completed, the Boers appeared in front of the town, on the south side of the river, so cutting off communication with Newcastle. They say they never had less than 1200 men round the town, but it is thought that at times their number did not exceed 600 or 700.

On the 25th the enemy's scouts had been active in the neighbourhood, but no shots were fired. That day there was a fearful thunderstorm, which killed some mules and horses in the camp, and probably checked the ardour of the Boers for an immediate battle. On the 27th Major Montague received information that a meeting of the Boers had been held not far off to discuss the method of attacking the town; and on that day the Major sent two despatches to Colonel Deane, informing him also that the enemy contemplated attacking any relief force that might come up from Newcastle at Walker's, that is to say, near Laing's Nek.

On the 29th of December the first shots were exchanged. A report having been received by Major Montague that there were 200 horsemen near the town on the other side of the drift, our mounted men crossed, but were surprised by 300 Boers, who made strenuous efforts to cut off the retreat of our small party. This they would have done but for the distinguished bravery of Volunteer Hall, who, while on vedette duty, saw the Boers approaching, and might have saved himself by retiring, but gallantly tried to cross the front of the Boers to warn his comrades of the impending danger. Hall achieved his purpose, but it cost him his life. Galloping in front of the Boers, his horse was shot under him. Taking shelter behind it, he opened fire on the enemy, and so attracted the attention of his party. One man against 300 could not long hold his own, and poor Hall was soon mortally wounded. Our mounted men retired on the camp, exchanging shots with the enemy. The Boers, following them, came on in a most determined manner to a hill 600 yards distant from our camp, and kept up a heavy fire on our position. A party of the 94th were sent down to the river and returned the fire of the Boers with good effect, as shortly afterwards the enemy retired to a stony koppie commanding the town—a position which they held with a strong force up to the time of the receipt of news of the armistice.

The following letter may prove of interest concerning this affair:—

'STANDERTON, *January* 2, 1881.

'SIR,—In acknowledging receipt of your report of 1st inst., I cannot refrain from expressing my entire approbation of the able and courageous manner in which you extricated your troops from a position of extreme danger. I attribute your escape as much to the caution you evinced in your disposition during the advance as to the holding back from fire when so hardly pressed, and so diverting all your energy to prevent the enemy from cutting off your line of retreat.

'In regard to the noble and self-sacrificing conduct of Volunteer Hall, I cannot express myself sufficiently grateful; and it will be with the sincere hope that he is alive, though in the hands of the enemy, that I shall make it my duty to bring the whole of the facts of his action specially to the notice of the General, considering as I do that it was through him the whole of the troop was saved from capture.

'You will be good enough to convey to the officers and men, and volunteers, and mounted men, my marked appreciation of their behaviour under peculiar circumstances—conduct which I shall bring to the notice of His Excellency on the earliest opportunity.—I have the honour to be,

'W. S. MONTAGUE, Major Commanding, Standerton.
'To Conductor F. Cassel, Commanding Mounted Troop.'

The Boers from this time kept up a desultory fire on our position. Whenever a man showed himself, as had to be done in passing from one position to another, or from one laager to another, the Boers potted away freely. On the 30th December Major Montague was slightly wounded in the leg by a Boer bullet; in fact, during the whole of the siege their marksmen devoted a considerable amount of attention to him, easily recognised as he could be by his uniform.

On the 4th of January our mounted men, starting early in the morning, went to Stander's Kop, where the Boers had begun to station vedettes, and at daylight drew the Boers on towards Stander's house at the foot of the hill, where a party of foot-soldiers had been previously placed in ambush. Some volleys were exchanged, and the Boers retired. Judging by the vultures seen hovering over the spot afterwards, there were at least some Boer horses killed by our men. The following day the Boers kept up a warm fire at long ranges at our laagers, but did no harm. So many of our men, however, had been wounded by stray bullets by this time, that the Dutch Reformed Church was occupied as an hospital. Establishing themselves in three separate laagers, the Boers kept up their rifle practice, and made some very good shooting. Within ten minutes, on one day, four bullets were sent by them into a small doorway at the rear of our largest laager. Even their fire from so great a distance as Stander's Kop was effective. Any door left open at camp was a mark for them, which they readily practised at, and on several occasions drove bullets in. One man in a *traverse*, well sheltered apparently, was hit by a spent bullet. When our men went out to their positions they had to run from one place to another, but no 'bobbing' or 'ducking' was allowed. One of the most laughable incidents of the siege was the construction of a gun. The fire from Stander's Kop proving very annoying, Major Montague ordered a dummy gun to be made, mounted on two wagon wheels. This unique instrument, made of strips of deal painted black, caused the Boers a good deal of alarm, whenever, with a great deal of ostentatious loading and ramming home, the gun was 'prepared for action.' To keep up the delusion, three or four rifles would occasionally be fixed under the 'gun,' their triggers connected with a string, and their charges fired simultaneously. As soon as preparations with the dummy were commenced, the Boers on Stander's Kop took to their heels out of sight of our 'artillery.' Surely there is a great deal to be said in favour of the moral effect of big guns after this. The officer in command of Standerton kept the heliograph working flashing messages to Paarde Kop, that is, Franklyn's place, thirty miles from this town towards Mount Prospect, in case our reinforcements might be moving up. The signalling of course was all on the one side. On the 4th March the enemy occupied another position 800 yards distant from our camp to the left. Out of that place they were driven by the fire of the company of the 58th from advanced rifle-pits. Again, on the 7th, they took up the same position, this time in greater force, and kept up a heavy fire on our men; but again the 58th forced the enemy to abandon the hill.

An incident of the siege worth recording was one on the 7th January, when, early in the morning, it was found that the Boers had raised fresh earthworks on the other side of the river, within 700 yards of our camp. Near the new position they had occupied was a house. Major Montague having planned a counter attack obtained from the Landdrost, Mr. Kroch, some Kaffir prisoners, who crossed the river at night, and, meeting no resistance, pulled down the earthwork built by the Boers, and burnt the house close by. Since peace has been made, the Boers say that they intended to bring their guns into that position. Why *the* guns did not arrive is not yet explained, neither is it known where they were to come from, unless it was some 'cannons' they have made out of hoop iron, the work of a German mechanic, who, I hear, is permanently retained to continue his labours as a manufacturer of big guns. This is no idle tale about the manufacture of guns out of hoop iron, but is a fact well ascertained and vouched for. As a return for the annoyance occasioned by the fire of the Boers from their laager across the river, Major Montague had two or three rifles sighted in the daytime and lashed to rests, and with these at night he used to pepper the Boer laager. The Boers after this came down close to the river at night and fired volleys in the direction of our camp, but no damage was done by their bullets. Occasionally, however, one would come through the thatched roof of the hospital. To give an idea of the shooting made by the enemy, it may be mentioned that 300 bullets were picked up in our camp on the 8th January.

About the middle of the same month, a Kaffir carrying despatches from Pretoria managed to get through the Boer lines, after being taken prisoner. The Boers searched him to find letters, but never thought of smashing a stick he carried, which had been hollowed out to admit of a piece of paper being concealed inside. With his stick the same Kaffir proceeded to Mount Prospect, and reached the place in safety. Word at another time was brought in by a Kaffir who had passed the Boer laager at Potchefstrom, that 160 wagons were coming towards Standerton, and were then close to the Waterfall River, and might be expected next day. Major Montague noticing at this time a movement of the Boers as if to co-operate with the approaching party, moved out and erected three forts in the direction whence an attack might be expected; but no fighting immediately followed this movement.

Of all the skirmishes, that of the 7th February was the most successful. Seventy infantrymen were on the night of the 6th taken out towards a house which had been occupied by the Boers, some two or three miles distant from the town. Next morning our mounted infantry moved out to draw the enemy towards the ambush. For some reason or other this movement failed, and the

Boers coming on in great force to where the infantry were concealed, our men had to make good their retreat under a hot fire. The retreat was made in a very cool manner, the enemy being kept at bay, and inflicting no loss on our side. The Boers were not slow to retaliate for this attempt to outwit them, and on the following day about twenty of their number crept up to within 200 yards of our vedettes, and suddenly poured volleys into them, but, wonderful to relate, the enemy only wounded one horse.

It will be seen that the siege of Standerton was by no means devoid of exciting incidents and perilous adventures. How well Major Montague handled his force is best told by the fact of the enemy being unable to gain any advantage during the two and a half months' investment; for it was not till the 11th March that a flag of truce was shown on the other side of the river, and our garrison learnt that an armistice had been agreed to.

An amusing tale is told by Major Montague anent this flag of truce. Two privates and a sergeant were daily stationed on the roof of the hospital as a look-out. Seeing some Boers approaching with a white flag, they reported the matter to the Major, who stood by. When the Boers with the white flag approached within a hundred yards or so of our lines, the look-out sergeant naïvely asked his commander for further orders: 'Shall we shoot now, sir, or wait till they get closer?' They were allowed to come closer, and not fired on. Major Montague pretended to be very indifferent as to receiving the supplies, and informed the enemy they must bring the wagons down to the water's edge and then retire.

The Boers, who were commanded by a man named Lombaard (with Cronje second in command), fired during the siege at least three times as many rounds as our men did, and our total expenditure of ammunition was 18,000. On our side the casualties were not heavy, but our men claim to have done considerable execution amongst the enemy.

From Landdrost Kroch, Major Montague acknowledges he received very excellent assistance, and by the storekeepers also every assistance was given cheerfully to the commanding officer to keep the men from obtaining liquor in undue quantities.

I think all that remains to be recorded of the siege of Standerton are two acts of individual bravery, and some acts which do not redound to the credit of the soldiery. As I have given prominence to instances of misconduct on the part of the Boers whenever they have come to my knowledge, I feel bound also to relate matters which tell against our own side: first, the disagreeable incidents, and then the bright side of the picture.

The house of an old Dutchman named Müller, who by permission of the Commandant had left the town when martial law was proclaimed, was broken into on the night of the 3d January, and a great amount of wilful damage done, articles of furniture and other things being ruthlessly smashed and destroyed. On the 6th January it was found that the Dutch Reformed Church had been broken into during the night. Bibles, hymn-books, the harmonium cover, and church clock, were missing. The large Dutch Bible was afterwards found amongst the property of a private of the 94th, in his quarters in the court-house. Other portions of the missing property were found amongst the effects of other men of the same regiment. Later on the store of Mr. Archer was broken into, and a quantity of saddlery taken away. Before the armistice was proclaimed, a bundle of whips was delivered by the military over to the magistrate—part of a parcel of stolen property.

To turn to the other side of the picture, on the 24th February, Sergeant Conway of the 58th, with a patrol, started at ten o'clock at night for Stander's Kop, and in the morning when the Boers came up to their usual positions, he with his half-dozen men shot three of the enemy. The Boers in force nearly surrounded the gallant party, who retired fighting their way and waving to the camp for assistance. A party from the garrison turned out and covered the retreat of the sergeant and his band of volunteers. The only drawback to this piece of daring courage and bravery is that no order had been given to the sergeant to undertake such a task. Probably the fault will be overlooked, and some reward for the gallantry may be made.

The next case is almost on all-fours with the one I have just given. The Boers, as I have related already, built during one night a fort in the shape of the letter A on the other side of the Vaal River, but within 700 yards of the town. 400 yards nearer the water's edge, and therefore 400 yards nearer the town, stood a house known as Scheeper's Shanty, and this it was thought advisable should be destroyed. Amongst other volunteers for the duty was one Injofa, a Swazie, now undergoing a term of penal servitude for culpable homicide. With a party of Kaffirs he crossed the river, and the men began pulling down this house. Injofa, however, took his gun and marched boldly up to the Boer earthwork, 400 yards away, and, to the astonishment of the spectators on the Standerton side of the river, reached the fort without a shot being fired at him. He then coolly began pulling down the fort by the aid of some tools he found inside it. While proceeding with his self-imposed task, in which he was seconded by a Kaffir named Picalili who came up to help him, the Boers opened fire. Picalili ran back to his party. Injofa took up his rifle, fired a shot at the Boers, and then proceeded leisurely with the work of demolishing the fort. That he accomplished, returned to the ruins of Scheeper's Shanty, and recrossed the river. When asked why he had exceeded his instructions, he said 'he knew he had done wrong, but his blood was up when he saw what a source of danger the fort was to our people.' I need hardly say his exploit was cheered by all our men, and officers and civilians alike shook hands with and congratulated the daring fellow. If a man ever earned a reprieve, Injofa has done so during the siege at Standerton. The foregoing is not the only instance of daring he has shown during the war. His term of imprisonment has yet two years to run. This man was in the Secocoeni war, and by his bravery there brought himself under the notice of Sir Garnet Wolesley. His crime is that of shooting a man. Injofa says he did it in self-defence; but, mark that after serving through the Secocoeni war, he came to the Landdrost here and delivered himself up as the man who had committed the crime.

During the siege the civilians started a newspaper, called the *Standerton Times*, which afforded some amusement. The spiritual wants of military and civilians were ministered to by the Rev. Mr. Spratt.

One more incident of the siege, and my account must close. In Stander's house under the hill bearing that name, there was found by a patrol of our men a half-caste man, named Grayling. He was brought into camp and imprisoned in the town. Shortly afterwards he was found brutally murdered. Suspicion attaching to four Kaffirs, they were put under arrest. In the night they broke out of prison and ran towards Stander's Kop. One of their number was captured, his grave dug, himself led to the brink, and there shot by a file of soldiers.

CHAPTER XXII.

A VISIT TO HEIDELBERG.

A VERY unenviable occupation (I wrote from Heidelberg on the 4th of April 1881) is that of travelling on horseback from Newcastle to Pretoria. The road is good as South African roads go, it is true, but the monotony of the journey is terrible, over a country in which there is nothing to be seen but flat after flat. Salisbury Plain is a cheerful and lively place compared to the plain of the Transvaal between Laing's Nek and Heidelberg. When I left Standerton, I was informed, 'on the best authority,' that there was no house where one could break the journey between there and Heidelberg (sixty miles), and that between Heidelberg and Pretoria (sixty miles), again the same distressing state of things prevailed. For the relief of the mind of that portion of humanity which henceforward may have to undergo the wretched ordeal of traversing that tract of country alone for the first time, I may be permitted to contradict emphatically that libel on this land. Thirty miles is the longest spell of riding it is necessary for any one to make without finding a wayside inn.

On the road from Standerton to Heidelberg there is noticeable within a few miles of the former place two or three deserted and ruined houses, whether the result of war or natural decay I cannot say. The house of one Mrs. Wade in the Waterfall district, at Bushman's Spruit, was untenanted, the owner having left for a place of greater security, though, to tell the truth, the more one hears of the behaviour of the Boers to those who took no part in hostilities, the more one inclines to the opinion that they behaved in a manner which reflects the highest credit upon them. At the Waterfall River is the store of Mr. Smith, and his house, a mile off the road, is one where the traveller can find comfortable shelter for the night. What the Boers required from the store of Smith they paid for. At the Rooi Koppes—a chain of hills which intersects the otherwise interminable plain—are two inns. Eighteen miles from the last-mentioned post brings you to Heidelberg. Built on the side of a hill, with hills in the background, and the Blesbok Spruit running in a semicircle round the town, the place is charmingly situated, and, with its white houses dotted on the green slope, has the appearance more of a Swiss village than a South African town, sweltering in some sheltered hollow.

Strictly speaking, Heidelberg is a market square surrounded by houses; and the Market Square is a space which looks as if it had been somewhat encroached upon by a very sturdy, plainly-built brick building, which but for its cruciform shape you might mistake for a barn. Two square pillars of a heavy order, with a very small bell suspended from a cross-bar between them, form the only adjunct to the only ecclesiastical edifice in Heidelberg, unless the vicarage, parsonage or pastor's house, at the side can be considered as part and parcel of the church. Behind the church you must walk if you wish to get a glimpse of the store of the locally well-known Mr. M'Laren and other places of business, so gigantic in its proportions is the sacred building, which, no matter which way you go, seems constantly to assert itself and force its presence on your mind—a splendid example of the church militant here on earth, or rather I should say here on stone, because the capital of the South African Republic has its foundations laid on that enduring substance, typical or non-typical of the stability of the new power to be established in these regions. In the centre of the Market Square is a stone basin, large enough for a small fort, but which was, I am told, erected as a pedestal for a sun-dial. Since its creation, however, a very small tree has been trying hard to live in it. The Dutch would say its melancholy and feeble attempts to thrive are emblematic of the British rule in the Transvaal. When the now almost withered stick is uprooted and a tree of liberty planted, I suppose within a short time we may expect to see the market-place entirely covered by its refreshing shade, under which wagons, bringing on Sundays their freight of worshippers for the big church, will be outspanned; under which on week-days a thriving, roaring, ever-increasing trade will be done, fostered by the new régime, until prosperity and fatness gladden the land and make it the one coveted spot on the face of nature. These pleasant visions are none of my picturing, but those of a more hopeful people.

I have heard the Transvaal spoken of as a fine and splendid country; but, so far as I have seen it, I have failed to discover either the one quality or the other. 'It's at all events a fine grazing country,' says one. That may be so, if the fact of there being one hundred acres of land available for every head of cattle in it constitutes grandeur of pasturage. Not only must a man have an extent of land totally disproportionate to the number of his stock if he wishes to keep his cattle from starving, but he must have a summer and a winter farm if he wishes to keep them free from sickness. I cannot see in what lies the grandeur of the country; perhaps there are wondrous spots that I have yet to discover, grass of a luxuriance and richness which my eye has not yet rested on; wood other than telegraph pole stumps; cultivated areas notable for the fertility of their soil; towns which have an appearance other than that of being three parts asleep. Eminently suited to the Boers is the Transvaal; but to no other people or nation on the face of the earth should I imagine it was worth two straws. That is my present opinion from the small portion I have seen of it. My knowledge of the Transvaal is very limited, and there may be a surprise in store for me yet.

Touching Heidelberg, a subject from which I have wandered, there is on one side of the Market Square, the kantoor, or public offices, comprising two rooms of medium size and an entrance hall or passage, which does duty as the post-office. A tin building, semi-detached, about as large as a sentry-box, was formerly the telegraph office. To the rear of this is the tronk or prison, which might be taken for a lock-up stable or any other outhouse belonging to a private dwelling. Though there are some buildings constructed of stone, the majority are of brick, either light red or yellow, the latter of a very indifferent quality. Some of the houses—notably that of Mr. M'Laren (which occupies with its grounds all one side of the square) and that of Mr. Fleming—the Royal and only hotel—are of a no mean order of design; indeed, constructed with skill and taste. The parsonage and bank are also the work of some other than a Dutch architect. The town is well supplied by water running from the hills at the rear towards Pretoria. The inhabitants, I am told, numbered about 250, the Scotch element predominating. As it goes without saying that there are in the world two classes of Scotchmen,—the one good, the other bad, the former very good, the latter but an indifferent sample,—I may as well state at once that the Scotchmen of Heidelberg belong decidedly and distinctly to the first-named element. Clannish but not cantankerous, they are noted for their open-heartedness and hospitality, and with Boers and English alike they have made friends no less by their geniality than by their independence of character. One gentleman, Mr. M'Laren, made himself conspicuous above all others by his kindness to the officers and others taken prisoners during the war.

Mr. Rudolph, the magistrate of Utrecht, whose influence over the Swazies was well known to the Boers, was one of the first to be brought in here. For twenty-six days he was kept in custody in the prison, and then his health began to fail. Mr. M'Laren interested himself to obtain the release of Mr. Rudolph from such close confinement, and after some difficulty brought him to his own house. Later on, when the officers came from Laing's Nek, and it was proposed to incarcerate them in the common gaol, Mr. M'Laren again used his influence with the authorities, with the result that they allowed him to take them as his guests. Willingly Mr. M'Laren and his partner, Mr. Pagin, became surety for the prisoners to the extent of several thousand pounds. The proposal was made that a sentry should be stationed at Mr. M'Laren's front and back gates. This called forth such an indignant protest from the gentleman that the idea was abandoned, and, having signed the *parole* form, our officers were left in free and undisturbed possession of Mr. M'Laren's house and grounds, and were right royally entertained from first to last by him. On my road I met Captain Hornby of the 58th, Lieutenants Wright, M'Donald, and Staunton of the 92d, and Lieutenant Millar of the 94th, journeying down with twenty-two Highlanders, eleven Riflemen, seven men of the Naval Brigade, one Hussar, and eight men of the 58th Regiment, who had been made prisoners on the Majuba (except Lieutenant Millar from Bronkhurst Spruit), and the appearance of one and all was sufficient evidence that they had been living on the fat of the land, without their verbal testimony to the kind treatment they had received. Colonel Stewart and Captain MacGregor, of the staff, who passed through Standerton while I was there, also spoke in the highest terms of the way in which Mr. M'Laren had entertained them. At the hands of the Boers also they received many attentions. Leaving the Nek on the 1st March, they travelled to this place, the officers in two wagons, and the men in five. Trekking along the high veldt, owing to the swollen state of the rivers, it took them eleven days to reach Heidelberg. Colonel Stewart, with Commandant Schutt, however, went on in advance in a spider when nearing Heidelberg, arriving a day before the main party. At first armed Boers kept close watch over the prisoners, but after a couple of days the rifles were put in the wagons and no guard was kept.

Commandant Schutt seems to have set the example to his men to treat the prisoners with every consideration and respect. I may term him, without injury to his feelings, 'a jolly fellow,' good-natured and affable; he was a great favourite with our men who had the good fortune to come into his hands. Mr. Peel, of Trieghart's Fontein, and many Boer farmers along the road, brought fruit, vegetables, and other good things to the prisoners. One night, being near the house of a Dutchman named Retief, whose son had been killed at Laing's Nek, some of our officers felt a delicacy in accepting an invitation to go inside. The wife of the Dutchman, however, came out and insisted on their entering, saying, with a piety shorn of the semblance of affectation, 'My Bible teaches me to love my enemies.' On arriving at Heidelberg the captives were introduced to Paul Kruger and Dr. Jorissen, who informed them on what terms they might enjoy a certain amount of liberty; one of which was, that they should hold no converse with any of the citizens, save those of Mr. M'Laren's household. Four servants and a cook were allowed to be located on Mr. M'Laren's premises, and the non-commissioned officers and men were stationed in a laager just outside the town on the other side of the river.

The Boers in force appeared round this town on Dingaan's Day. Lining the hills at the rear of the town, they advanced several hundred men across the river and encircled the place; then Joubert with a force of several hundred came into the town. No resistance was made nor could it have been offered by the inhabitants. There were no arms save an odd rifle or two; and a request sent to Pretoria for ammunition some little time prior to the advent of the Boers was not replied to. The resident magistrate, Mr. Ueckerman, was absent on circuit; the public prosecutor, Mr. Nabal, was the official to whom General Joubert applied for the keys of the kantoor. Mr. Nabal refused to hand them over, so the invading force took them and opened the public offices, and installed themselves there. In a short time a proclamation was drawn up and publicly read to the onlookers assembled outside. The Republican flag was hoisted on the staff—a very small flag, little bigger than those with which youngsters delight to embellish Christmas trees, and very much the worse for wear. It has since been replaced by a larger and brand-new banner, which at this moment still flies at the masthead, ready for the time when the Transvaal shall come under the government of 'the Boer leaders.'

One of the laws enjoined by the Boers was that all lights should be put out at nine o'clock, and 'the curfew tolled the knell of parting day' with great regularity. This was the result of a complaint made by the Boer town-guard, that certain citizens late at night came out in *déshabillé* and insulted them. Though the inhabitants submitted with a comparatively good grace to the change of rulership, there was not wanting, as may be readily supposed, a certain amount of ill-feeling between the English and their new masters.

The Boers commandeered sums varying from £50 to £10, or a horse, saddle, bridle, and gun. The less wealthy of the inhabitants who had no ten-pound notes, and who possessed neither horse, saddle, bridle, nor gun, were told that, failing a contribution to the South African Republic exchequer, they themselves must go and fight. This highly incensed the people. One lady told me she thought that the situation was getting serious, and, being a married woman, she went to the kantoor, and obtaining an audience of Dr. Jorissen, thus spoke: 'Dr. Jorissen, I want to know why you are going to send my husband to fight; not for my sake, though; he can go if the others go; but I want to know why he and two or three others should be picked out because they haven't got the money to pay; not that we would pay it, mind you, if we had it and to spare. Now, why do you pick my husband out?' The Doctor, probably not prepared for such a visit, tried to temporise, but without avail. At last he admitted it was a mistake, and promised never to do so again. 'Yes, and you know it,' continued the lady (one from north of Berwick). 'You know we've only been in this country a twelvemonth, and is it likely we're going to fight against our own flag?' Forensic ability stricken powerless by the sound argument of the indignant matron, Dr. Jorissen could only submit unconditionally. Thanking the Doctor for nothing, the lady returned to her abode, having won the victory she promised to herself before she put on her bonnet.

Though the Boers commandeered wherever they could obtain contributions, they thereafter religiously paid for everything they required at the stores. An instance is given in which a young Boer asked the price of a bottle of Hollands at a store, and then refused to pay more than five shillings for the article. That circumstance was, however, reported by *some of his comrades* to the Commandant, and he was severely reprimanded for his insolence, and warned not to repeat the offence. This had a wholesome effect in checking, and indeed altogether preventing, recurrences of acts of this nature. Mr. Piet Maynard, the manager of the Standard Bank here, was commandeered for a horse, saddle, and bridle, and then for £10. Afterwards he was requested to go down to Laing's Nek with provisions, but he refused to do so; for this contempt he was fined £20.

The Commandant-General of this district was Hercules Milan, and under him were Commandants Jan Marais and Veldt Cornets Cornelius Marais and Dors Newenhaus. In the absence of General Milan, Andres Depres acted as Commandant-General. Hen. Edward Bok and Jacob Maré were also here during the greater part of the time.

As regards the defence of the town from attack from without, the Boers made laagers; their main one on the other side of Blesbok Spruit on a commanding ridge, and one on the road to Middleburg, while one party was stationed at first at the poort or pass in the hills north of the town on the road to Pretoria, but this post was afterwards abolished. To go from one place to another, the inhabitants of the town had to get passes. One of the prisoners kept here was Sir Morrison Barlow, Bart., the Swazie Commissioner, whose influence over that tribe, anxious as the Boers knew they were to fight, was dreaded no less than that of Mr. Rudolph. Sir Morrison was therefore brought from Derby, New Scotland, to this town early in the day, but has enjoyed as great an amount of liberty as was compatible with the strict surveillance of one who, by raising his finger, could have brought a horde of warlike blacks about the ears of the enemy.

Sir Morrison Barlow despised the Boers heartily, and as soon as they quietly took him prisoner, he began to hate them like poison, and never lost an opportunity of signifying his displeasure in a quiet way. One of his misfortunes was that a private letter of his was intercepted by the Boers, and as it contained a reference to the letting loose of the Swazies upon the Boers, the insurgents made a good deal of capital out of it at the expense of Sir Morrison.

In Heidelberg he went about like one mourning, both during and after his imprisonment. Oham and other Zulu chiefs were, if I am rightly informed, anxious for permission to 'eat up' the Dutchmen, but they were enjoined to sit still, and they obeyed.

On the way up here the Boers visited all the kraals, and forced men into their service as leaders, drivers, and servants; and I am also assured on good authority that they sent messengers to Oham and other Zulus, and asked for their help, but this the Zulus stoutly refused to give. During the occupation by the Boers, Mr. Hall, one of the proprietors of the Royal Hotel, lost his life merely for the want of medical assistance. Attacked with fever, there was no medical man available to attend to him, and though a request was sent to Pretoria for one of the doctors to be permitted to come down, the request could not be complied with, and death soon finished the poor man's sufferings.

As Sir Evelyn Wood was expected hourly to arrive, and to proceed to Pretoria forthwith, and as I was anxious to get there at the same time, I could not make a long stay in Heidelberg. I had, however, the pleasure of spending one evening at Mr. M'Laren's house, and some notable visitors dropped in during the time. One was Commandant Schutt, another was Dr. Jorissen. The first named is the Boer officer who had shown so much consideration for our wounded and prisoners. It was not long before he was seated at the piano, and entertaining us with music. He had a notion of striking two bars, and he struck them on that instrument with a vengeance as accompaniments to songs which volunteers in the circle gave. There was a fund of wit and gay humour about Schutt which made him a favourite with everybody; there was a fund of humour also in the gentleman (an Englishman) who proposed, and in all the guests who sang, 'Rule Britannia,' and other songs appropriate to the place and the occasion, whilst the Boer Commandant thumped on the key-notes with his ponderous fingers those two bars which did duty for every piece in the vocal programme. When on the eve of parting, 'Auld Lang Syne' was sung in the orthodox fashion, with the grave and reverend Dr. Jorissen as one of the circle, his hands crossed, and on either side jerked up and down by a stalwart Scotchman, with force enough to loosen the socket fastenings. The scene was one worthy the pencil of an artist. The health of Her Gracious Majesty the Queen was not left out of the toast list that evening at the table of our loyal host.

Sir Evelyn Wood arrived late in the evening. He had been turned out of his spider into the road, but was none the worse for the accident. Major Fraser, with artillery horses, had been placing relays along the route for His Excellency; but the poor brutes were hardly fit to drag themselves along, much less a spider. Every other stage Major Fraser made, a horse would 'knock up,' and then the fate of that horse was to be left with another and a servant for the arrival of Sir Evelyn Wood to furnish his 'relay' for the next post. The General had no other attendant than a Hottentot driver. Arriving at Heidelberg, he was a little surprised to hear that the Republican flag was flying over the court-house still; he did not *see* it, because it happened to be dark when he came. In the course of an interview he had with the Boer leaders, he told them they had better remove the flag. The Triumvirate said they would like to do so, but were afraid because of their followers; and they suggested that in leaving the town next morning His Excellency should make a slight circuit to avoid the court-house. This Sir Evelyn would not listen to, and plainly told the Boers they must remove it, or else 'they had better make up their minds to go back to the Nek. If he saw it floating there in the morning, he would send some men to pull it down, and that might lead to trouble.'

When I started at six next morning for Pretoria, the flag was still flying over the court-house; but His Excellency next day at Pretoria told me that the flag was pulled down before he came out of the hotel.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SIEGE OF PRETORIA.

TO give anything like a fair description of the country which separates Heidelberg from Pretoria, would involve me (now writing at Pretoria on April 7th) in a story which would fill much space in the following strain:—After passing over a flat some three or four miles in extent, the limit of which is the sky-line to the traveller's eye, you come to another flat, then there is another, then there is another, then there is another, etc. etc. As I did not note the precise number of flats to be traversed, I am unable to tell an interesting tale of a long trek. At Mooi Fontein, a spot about half-way between the two capitals, is the hotel of Messrs. Gatonby & Bond,—better known as 'Ferguson's,'—and that is the only place *en route* where one can find food and refreshment for man and beast. Messrs. Gatonby & Bond were, in common with other English non-combatants, visited by the Boers, and contributed to the funds of the dominant power in the Transvaal.

Ten miles from Pretoria—the Heidelberg side—the country begins to bear a different aspect to that which is its main characteristic from the moment you reach the hills which form the background to Heidelberg. Here and there are patches of bush. Farmhouses, with large spaces of cultivated land, border the road, and remind one that after all there are at least some parts of the country which will profitably repay the work of the ploughshare. The nearer you approach Pretoria, the more things seem to improve. Within sight of the road there are vast reaches of pasture land thickly knotted with trees—not thin, straggling thorn-growth, but neat, prim, and leafy trees, such as you see in an English park. Whether this timber is valuable for other purposes than firewood I cannot say, as I was too anxious to reach Pretoria to go out of the way to inquire. At any rate, here is a portion of the Transvaal where a man might live without being haunted continually by the impression that he was in a wilderness of grass. Here is something that the eye can rest upon, and the observer say, 'That is a point I can see, and which I know I can reach, and it will be there when I get to it.' With only the bare, flat veldt always before you, you never do reach the spot you see miles ahead,—or a thousand yards ahead, for the matter of that,—as it invariably recedes as you attempt to approach it. These fertile, well-timbered farms, which are thickly dotted round Pretoria, are mostly occupied by Boers. Here also you see some troops of cattle. Formerly the only living creatures one came across were buck, hawks, carrion-crows, vultures, grasshoppers, ants, and hoarse-croaking frogs in the sluits and swamps. Six miles from Pretoria is the six-mile spruit, or Erasmus' Spruit, the latter name bestowed on account of the contiguity of a farm belonging to a Boer of that name. Close to the spruit is a building with the word 'hotel' inscribed over the portal; but the only inward sign of its being a place where certain men do love most to congregate was a broken iron bedstead. The six-mile spruit runs in the shade of overhanging trees over a gravelly bottom. Clear and sparkling, it looks more like a Devonshire trout stream than one of the muddy spruits of South Africa. Of Pretoria you cannot as yet get the faintest glimpse. Tradition tells you it is six miles distant, and by the telegraph line you can fix approximately the direction in which, sooner or later, you will find the town.

It was at the six-mile spruit that the Boers had their headquarters during the siege of Pretoria; but there is no sign of their having turned a sod to resist any sortie that might be made by the beleaguered garrison. The rest of the road lies up and down hill, and, after winding about the last four miles round the base of mountains, taking a course which might be illustrated by half a dozen of the letters S, you come in sight of Pretoria. I do not think, though I have never seen Jerusalem, that the hills stand more about that famous city than they do about Pretoria. North of the town—its streets were laid out north, south, east, and west by 'the oldest inhabitant' by the aid of a sixpenny pocket compass—there is chain after chain of hills, the one so much like the other that the eye of the stranger fails to detect any difference in them. South, as I have already said, it being the line of approach to the capital from Heidelberg, there are mountains enough, which you have to circumvent to reach the city. East and west also there are ranges of hills, which complete the circle within which Pretoria is concealed. Lying on a gentle sloping ground, the town is at one and the same time drained and supplied with water by gravitation. There is a good amount of open space not yet deformed by the builders within the limits of Pretoria. An abundance of rose fences and trees give the city an air of coolness uncommon to the other towns I have visited in the Transvaal; and altogether, if first impressions are worth anything, I should say that Pretoria is the most pleasantly situated and agreeable town in these latitudes. There has been here no pulling down of houses or destruction of buildings by military orders during the war, therefore the city remains intact as it was prior to the siege—if siege it can be called—which its inhabitants have endured for over two months. The fact of a great many stores being closed (because they had no stock to sell), and a certain amount of excitement and evident disinclination of the people generally to settle down to work,—they are engaged in strolling about discussing the political situation, or the want of one,—are the only present signs noticeable to a stranger of there ever having been anything to disturb the ordinary humdrum routine of life here. Every other man you speak to is going to 'clear out of this'; or else forswear for ever allegiance to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, learn Dutch, buy a suit of corduroy, a dirty felt hat, and a brilliant-coloured muffler, and turn Boer. As yet the good people of Pretoria know nothing for certain as to what the outcome of the armistice-peace is to be. As at Newcastle, so here, some of the leading inhabitants hoped to be delivered from their state of suspense by the arrival of Sir Evelyn Wood; those who succeeded in obtaining interviews with His Excellency came away confessing he was very polite to them, and his manners were most agreeable. He was ready to converse freely with them about Afghanistan, the Franco-Prussian war, the Eastern Question, if desirable; but whenever the future of the Transvaal was introduced, His Excellency dexterously but promptly changed the theme, and his audience came away convinced by this reticence that 'all is lost.' If for one moment people would remember that His Excellency Sir Evelyn Wood has had no more to do with the piece of patchwork now in course of manufacture than the man in the moon, what trouble they might save themselves, what skirmishing they might save one of the hardest-worked men in Natal or the Transvaal!

Mixed as is the population here at the present moment, so has it been throughout. The English have had fighting on their side some hundreds of men whose conduct, though apparently loyal, was at the same time always under a watchful eye, for fear they should give way to the temptation to join the side with which they sympathized, but dare not openly proclaim for. Mistrust between Hollander and Englishman, a certain amount of jealousy, such as will invariably be found to exist between regular and irregular forces, made the defence of Pretoria a work of by no means a pleasant nature, and gave rise to rumours of ill-feeling between civilians and military, which I heard of when at Heidelberg. On the whole, considering also the irritation which the observance of martial law is sure to entail, I do not think, from what I have learnt since I have been at Pretoria,—and I have taken opinions as freely as I could gather them on one side and the other,—that the disagreement, ill-feeling, or difference, call it what you like, between civilians and military has been so serious as at Heidelberg I was led to suppose, or that it at any time assumed proportions which threatened to endanger the common weal of the inhabitants, whether civil or military.

If the civilians who were enrolled and fought for the defence of Pretoria lost a greater proportion of their number than did the military in the various skirmishes which took place, it does not follow that the only inference to be drawn is that their lives were held cheaper by the officer in command of the garrison than were the lives of the soldiers. The inference that a compliment was indirectly paid to the volunteers, by selecting them for perilous duty, is by no means an unfair one, though in its commission the duty might not be altogether relished. *Primâ facie* a case may readily be made out that it is the duty of the soldier trained to arms, and following the profession of arms, to bear the brunt of the fight, and that volunteers and pressed men should be regarded more as reserves in a case of emergency. Whether this order or the reverse was observed during the siege of Pretoria, I will not venture to say. I know that at the close of so unsuccessful a campaign for the British arms, as has been that of Boer and English of the year 1880–81, there must be a disposition on the part of those who imagine they suffer most by a failure to assert British authority to cast about for a scapegoat. I know also that, as a rule, in military circles the irregular soldier is regarded more or less as an interloper and intruder. Consequently a feeling almost amounting to contempt (however unjustifiable it may be) is felt by the soldier for the men who for the time being are associated with him in the profession of arms. I am perfectly aware that there will be hundreds willing to deny, and that emphatically, that any such feeling imbues the soldier. But I make the statement thoroughly convinced of its base resting on hard facts, and also from a slight knowledge of what is human nature—that between a man who has elected to follow a certain profession, is educated especially for that profession, and follows that profession and that profession alone, and the man who by the force of circumstances has to leave his previous occupations, and without an equal amount of training for the task, joins the same profession, there is invariably at first—probably it will die the natural death of all petty jealousies in the course of time—a feeling of jealousy, very sure and certain, but which one only hears of by whispers and side hints.

It must also be remembered that in Pretoria there were certain lady prisoners, whose husbands held high service in the Republican ranks. I do not think that these ladies suffered any peculiar hardship by being incarcerated within the four corners of Pretoria, above and beyond those hardships which come of restricted liberty to all alike. The wives of Boer leaders unfortunately were just open to the suspicion of wishing to let their husbands know how they fared during an enforced absence, and we all know that when once a lady begins to write a letter it is uncertain which subject will be the next for comment, whether whooping-cough, politics, or the weather. The eagerness with which ladies will contrive to evade such a cruel order as one to refrain from communicating with their husbands, is a matter of much less uncertainty. As the town proper was abandoned every night by the inhabitants for the laager, in case a night attack by the Boers should be made, it was necessary that one and all, without respect to age, sex, or condition, should take shelter in the laager; and even in the day-time, when the wives of the Boer leaders wished to walk about the town or environs, so dangerous was the proximity of the enemy that it was considered advisable these ladies should have a personal male attendant in uniform walking within sight at a respectful distance. These precautions were not highly valued or appreciated by the ladies in question; and when a lady once gains your ear to unfold the details of such grievous wrongs, one must needs sympathize or be mute. Either listen and force the tears into your eyes, or be branded thenceforth as a rude, rough, unfeeling, insulting, and unmanly wretch. Despite the stories I have heard of ungenerous treatment by the Commander of the fair section I have been alluding to (though I was too polite to tell my informants my opinion at the time), I must say that on their own statements I think there is no case made out against either Colonel Bellairs, Colonel Gildea, or any other officer, of undue severity or surveillance; on the contrary, that they performed an exceedingly delicate task in a delicate manner. So much for the present respecting the 'disagreeable rumours' which reached Heidelberg.

When the inhabitants became aware in December of the intention of the Boers to rise and throw off the yoke of British rule, there was generally—I think I am speaking within the mark—an opinion that martial law should be proclaimed. When I say generally, I must of course be understood as referring to the purely English population, who had no sympathy with the Boers. That desire was soon gratified.

First, it may be as well that I should give a brief description of the camp and fortifications here. Respecting those of the Boers, north, south, east, or west, the following official return may be considered the approximate number of wagons and men occupying the defensive laagers in this neighbourhood, viz.:—(1) Elandsfontein, ten miles west of Pretoria, about twelve wagons in a deep and precipitous ravine, surrounded by stone sconces, some of which are on the summit of a rather high hill, part of the Daaspoort range. A strong position, with about 100 Boers, but who can be reinforced to double that number from a camp a little farther westward, the precise situation of which has not been properly ascertained. (2) Albertus Pretoria's farm, where the six-mile spruit runs through the range south of Pretoria, fifteen miles west-by-south of Pretoria. A strong position, and very difficult of approach; was at one time a large laager, but has now twenty to thirty wagons, with about the same number of men, and a good many women and children. (3) Red House, Erasmus Erasmus' place, eleven miles south-by-west of Pretoria, and three miles west of main road to Heidelberg; consists of a brick house, with a stone kraal to the left, and a laager of fifteen wagons. It is situated on the top of a slope; visible from every side; can be easily approached, and is commanded by higher ground to the south; is not a strong position, the country being comparatively open around when approaching it from the north. About 150 Boers are stationed here, but this number can be readily increased from the laager at Strydon's farm, three or four miles to the eastward.

As to the English defence works, Fort Tillichewan, named after the castle of Sir George Campbell, father-in-law of Colonel Gildea, is situated south of the town on a hill near which passes the main road from Heidelberg. Fort Commeline, taking its name from Lieutenant Commeline of the Engineers, its constructor, lies south-south-west of the town, and guards the road before mentioned. The gaol on the confines of the town,—still south,—and the convent at the other end of the next plot on which stands the gaol, were utilized as the ends north and south of one large laager, the sides of which were built up with wooden barricades, loopholed and strengthened by sand-bags placed on the inner side. The convent itself, a substantial two-storied building, was loopholed and otherwise made fit for its new purpose. The peaceful inmates were obliged to find accommodation in the chapel. The walls of the gaol, brick-built, had hardly been completed when the siege commenced. Masons drawn from the ranks of the inhabitants of the town, now under martial law, were set to work to raise the walls, and to erect at the south-eastern angle a martello or flanking tower. The purpose to which it was thought feasible to apply this permanent structure in peace times was that of a lunatic asylum, as the accommodation for that class of suffering humanity in Pretoria is somewhat insufficient; not that any one must run away with the idea that the dimensions of the new tower are such as would afford lunatics, or even a 'swinging cat,' room enough to move with comfort. The person who originated the idea that the new tower, would answer such a purpose is likely, I should imagine, to find good quarters there at no very distant date, if the merits of his scheme are considered by rational men possessing the usual quota of brains unturned. The tower would make a capital dungeon or cell, in which a lunatic would soon end his days, but not a lunatic asylum. During the completion of the prison walls and tower, a temporary platform, raised on telegraph poles, and protected by sand-bags, was raised, and remains to this day. Outside the eastern wall, and on this platform, was mounted one of the guns. In the laager, which is called the Convent Laager, the quarters of the volunteers were. Wooden sheds were erected for sleeping and mess quarters;

tents pitched in the quadrangle also afforded shelter to some of the men. Here Major le Mesurier was in command, and if praise is not out of place, he did his duty well, and was a favourite with all under him. Fort Campbell is named after Captain Campbell of the 94th (another officer of whom one hears none but golden opinions), and commanded by him; it lies still farther to the south and east. The main camp is to the south-west of both the Convent Laager and Fort Campbell. Here a strong position was made, defended by the 21st Fusiliers, under Colonel Gildea, the guns being distributed between this fort, Fort Campbell, and Fort Tillichewan. As regards the north of the town, the proposition to make an earthwork on the ridge of hills forming the natural boundary to the city in that direction was never fully carried out. Practically our forces were concentrated at night in the forts south of Pretoria, and the town was to a certain extent left to take care of itself. In the day-time it was, of course, busy with the tread of those who would when darkness came on take their turn on outpost duty. As a consequence of the practical abandonment of the town at night, there were a good many cases of robbery—houses and stores broken into, and depredations of that kind. There is also a strong suspicion prevalent among the inhabitants—and individual Boers have boasted of it as a feat they easily performed—that Boer spies came into the town at night, approaching it from the north, and this despite the vigilance of Captain Campbell, the Provost-Marshal, and the small force allotted to him to carry out his duty. Considering all things, it must be acknowledged that the people of Pretoria behaved with wonderful patience under the trying circumstances of life during the siege. The volunteers were paid five shillings a day, and received rations, in return for their services; and those who worked for the Government, either as saddlers, joiners, carpenters, bricklayers, blacksmiths, or in any capacity as artisans, had some little additional pecuniary allowance made them; but what compensation, every one asks, have we now for cheerful endurance of privations and attempts to keep the rebels out, when we see our property depreciated fifty, sixty, and seventy per cent., and the Boers by Act of Parliament constituted our masters? There will be sighs enough heard from Pretoria before this business is settled. I need not therefore stop to dilate upon the woes of the stricken.

The total number of effective fighting men would be about 2000 in all, made up of the following details:—2d-21st Scots Fusiliers, four companies; headquarters staff and band; a company of the 94th; Davey's Horse or Pretoria Carbineers (which increased from the time of the proclamation of martial law from about 70 to 140); Nourse's Horse, 100; Pretoria Rifles, 500. Of some of the 94th a troop of mounted infantry was raised. In command was Colonel Bellairs, with Colonel Gildea under him.

The mail service ceased after the 18th December, as the cart was stopped at Heidelberg by the Boers, who took all the Government letters except some despatches addressed to Sir Owen Lanyon. These were saved from confiscation by one of the lady passengers hiding them in her dress. Allowed to go on to the capital, this discreet person delivered the despatches intact.

It was not until Conductor Egerton and Sergeant Bradley arrived from the bloody field of Bronkhurst Spruit, with news of what had happened to the 94th Regiment, that any real alarm was felt. When once that feeling was raised, it seems to have grown and prevailed mightily. In point of numbers, at all events, the Boers round Pretoria were not sufficient to create much alarm; and as they contented themselves with simply watching the capital from a distance of six miles, and never attempted to attack it, the siege of Pretoria, if it can be called a siege, was, compared with the investment of other towns in the Transvaal by the Boers, a very tame affair. About 600 Boers, distributed in laagers, or roughly fortified places (selected with a view to natural strength also) round Pretoria, kept the population of Pretoria, military and civilian, cooped up in the capital, like rats in a barrel, for three months. Evidently the Bronkhurst Spruit affair had a moral effect, the extent of which it is not difficult to gauge when the history of the investment is calmly considered.

One good and useful result the late war will have: it will teach England that if she is to keep pace with her neighbours, and hope to be respected as a nation of some strength, she must look to her army. It has for some time enjoyed amongst her own countrymen the reputation of being efficient and good; it is small, but then we have had no opportunity of testing its qualities fairly. Though we have had plenty of work amongst hordes of untrained savages and undisciplined foes like the Afghans, we have not tried our steel against white men as clever as ourselves in handling weapons, as clever as we are in tactics of offence and defence. If another instance were needed of a something wanting in our army (I don't pretend to know in what particular direction the failing is), the defence of Pretoria would furnish one. It is a somewhat remarkable fact that the garrison of Standerton, opposed by at least as many of the enemy as there were around Pretoria,—an enemy much more combative and active in its offensive operations than were those who, six or seven miles from this town, sat down quietly to invest it,—should have protected as great an area of ground (I believe a greater) than the far superior force numerically in this capital. The fort at Standerton is quite as far from the town as is Fort Royal from Pretoria city. The redoubts at Standerton were as far from the main stronghold as are any of the minor forts here. In the case of Standerton the town could be protected night and day; in Pretoria the town could not be protected at night or day. At Standerton they had no guns; at Pretoria there were 7-pounders, 9-pounders, and rocket tubes. Dynamite was plentiful here, and to a certain extent it did good work; its moral effect was incalculable. The Boers knew we had some, and they dreaded it as the unholy one is said to dread holy water. It was laid at points near the town which the Boers might be expected to pass, and it was useful on several occasions in creating diversions. When the Boers were to be attacked south of the city, a charge would first be exploded on the hills north of the city. The Boers, hearing the report, galloped miles to what they imagined was the scene of action, and, having tired their horses by this fool's errand, discovered, but too late, that their presence would be of far greater service to their comrades in quite an opposite direction.

In Pretoria there was a doubtful element, as I have already said, as dangerous perhaps to our arms, as much feared, at all events, as was the dynamite by the Boers. In Pretoria there were Boers who had to take up arms in defence of the town, and who to do this had to fight against their own brothers. Many instances are on record of one brother carrying a rifle in this city, whilst the other brother had to do his best to obtain its surrender. It was perhaps this danger in the midst of the defenders which, to a certain extent, is accountable for the manner in which the defence of the capital was conducted, and offensive movements with inoffensive results to the enemy carried out.

At what is called the Swartkop fight there were some 200 men on our side engaged. The Swartkop is twelve or thirteen miles south-east of Pretoria. The Carbineers, started before the advance of the main body, had been told off to occupy a position on the left of the main point of attack, 'so that the retreat of the enemy should be cut off.' When Colonel Gildea, with the main body, arrived at daybreak at Streuben's farm, it was seen that the Carbineers were already about to engage the enemy. Keeping Lieutenant O'Grady's mounted infantry (94th men) in reserve, Colonel Gildea advanced his men, with the one 9-pounder, to within artillery range of the Swartkop, held by the Boers, and on which they had built a laager. Fire was opened by the gun, while the infantry—two companies of the 2d-21st under Lieutenant Stanuel—led the front attack, in skirmishing order. Lieutenant Littledale, with sixty men, meanwhile moved to the left to attack the Boer right flank. The artillery fire was not so effective as could be wished. Immediately a shell struck the laager the Boers swarmed out of it, and, spreading themselves over the koppie, well extended, took excellent shelter behind the boulders with which the crown of the hill was strewn. At the same time they kept up a hot fire on our infantry and Carbineers. The practice of the Boers, I am told, is to rush forward as soon as they see the white puff of smoke from the gun; at a long range they are able, of course, to make some little distance before the projectile is near them, and their tactics in this respect have saved them many lives on more than one occasion. After three-quarters of an hour's fighting, the Boers showed a white flag, and Colonel Gildea, with his orderly carrying a white flag, advanced. On this point, over which there has been some dispute, the Hon. James Brooks, who was a spectator of the affair, states distinctly that the Boers did show a white flag, and that it was only the Carbineers on our side who continued to fire after it was shown, and that their mark was some Boers who galloped in hot haste from the rear of the koppie, to make their escape as soon as the fire of our men in the front ceased. Colonel Gildea and his orderly had a very narrow escape, as the Boers on the hill, when we got close to their position, fired a volley at him and his attendant, the bullets striking all round. Retiring, he ordered the Fusiliers to advance, and in doing so they soon had a dozen men placed *hors de combat.* The bugle sounded the 'charge,' but the moment the men's bayonets flashed into the sockets, the Boers, probably dismayed at the sight, showed a flag of truce, with which, after some slight hesitation, one of their number advanced to meet our Commander.

Unconditional surrender were the terms. Fourteen prisoners were taken, three Boers and three natives killed, and one Boer, Hans Botha, said to be their Commandant, was also found on the koppie, severely wounded by the splinters of the shell. Eight covered wagons, laden with provisions, and a large number of oxen, rifles from the Martini-Henry, Westley-Richards, and elephant gun pattern, were amongst the spoil taken by us.

The wagons were blown up, and our party, after pulling down the laager, returned to Pretoria, but were attacked on the way by reinforcements of the enemy. Seventy mounted Boers were seen galloping towards Mundt's Poort, while others occupied a long ridge running from Streuben's farm towards the city. It looked as if they meant surrounding our party. Rockets (cow horns, the Boers call them) were sent amongst the enemy on the ridge, and the infantry advanced to the left. Our wagons were formed up ready to laager, and the 9-pounder sent a few shells, fired at long ranges, which seemed to scare the enemy, who then allowed our men to continue their march unmolested. In this engagement Captain Sampson, of Nourse's Horse, was severely wounded, but was most gallantly carried out of action by Lance-Corporal Hampton. When the Captain recovered himself a little, he refused to have the medical men in attendance on him, requesting them to see to those who were more severely wounded than he was.

A battle, fight, or skirmish at Elandsfontein, nine or ten miles west of the city, took place on 16th January (Sunday). The force engaged on our side, which started from Pretoria before daybreak, comprised the mounted infantry, two 9-pounders, one 7-pounder, Nourse's Horse under Glynn, parties of the 2d-21st, 94th, and volunteers — the infantry being conveyed some way towards the scene of action by mule wagons. The Carbineers again acted as advance scouts. Arriving at the other side of Skinner's farm, Nourse's Horse went forward to the right, led by Lieutenant Jones. To the left of Elandsfontein ridge, which is the natural boundary of the town lands of Pretoria in that direction, is a koppie behind which was a laager erected by the enemy. Whilst the position was being reconnoitred by Colonel Gildea, intelligence was brought to the Commander that the enemy were occupying a strong position on one of the slopes of the ridge. The volunteers were sent to the left to cover the line of our retreat, should it be found necessary to fall back. With them they took the 7-pounder, and formed a laager. The two 9-pounders, under the charge of Lieutenant Hare, R.A., with the infantry (2d-21st and 94th, under Lieutenants Stanuel and Hall), advanced to some ground to shell the enemy's position. It was now seen that the Boers had two laagers, besides schanzes, and that the position was a strong one, and defended by a large body. Nourse's Horse rode to the base of a spur on our right front, and, dismounting, climbed to its summit, and opened fire on a party of the enemy within range. The Boers retired, and Nourse's men, led by Glynn, followed them up bravely, driving them rapidly back on their main body. The guns opening fire, and one shot making a breach in the laager walls, the enemy took shelter outside, and behind stones, and opened a very telling fire on the infantry as soon as the latter came within range. Nourse's troop, which had now advanced to within 200 yards of the enemy's lines, were seen to be rather overmatched, so the infantry went to support them, while the 7-pounder and rocket tube played away furiously on the enemy. Before long, 200 Boers were seen galloping up as reinforcements across a nek between Quagga and Volvengaten Poorts, where there was no one to dispute the passage with them.

Colonel Bellairs, arriving on the field at this juncture, deemed it prudent to withdraw our forces without further attempting to carry the position of the enemy. The artillery fire kept in check the Boer reinforcements, now increasing every minute, as the whole country had been alarmed by the sound of the battle, and the Boers flocked from all quarters to the scene of the affray. Emboldened by their success, they came boldly out from their cover, and played considerable mischief with our retiring force. Again and again the guns took up position, and shelled the enemy; but their blood was up, and they attacked again and again Nourse's troop of the mounted infantry, who covered the retreat. The mounted men did their duty well; it was not till Quagga's Poort was reached, at two o'clock in the afternoon, that the firing ceased.

During this engagement there was rather a good race witnessed between Nourse's Horse and a party of Boers for first place on a koppie. Our men won the race, and made their competitors repent ever entering the lists for that particular competition. An incident worthy of note in this fight was the courage with which Corporal Murray (94th) and Trooper Danaker tried to rescue from under fire a man of the 21st who was wounded. Murray nearly lost his life in the attempt, being wounded by a bullet. Danaker, finding it impossible alone to carry either of the two, retired after firing a shot at the enemy, himself slightly wounded. Surgeon-Major Comerford and Dr. Dyer attended the party on this occasion. The latter, with permission of the Boers, went out afterwards and brought in our wounded; but his offers of assistance to those hurt on the other side were refused.

Whilst the fight was going on at Elandsfontein, some Boers made a feint of attacking the town, coming down to Mr. Mear's farm and shooting a number of our cattle grazing there. His Excellency Sir Owen Lanyon and staff, with all available mounted men, went out to meet the enemy, the guns from the forts opened fire, and the inhabitants precipitately took shelter in the laagers. After the exchange of a few shots between the mounted infantry and the enemy, the latter retired.

The official report of Colonel Gildea respecting this unsuccessful engagement caused considerable comment and much heartburning, especially the paragraph I reproduce:—'Had Captain Sanctuary held this hill, as he might have done, the enemy's movement in this direction would have been checked. It is true Captain Sanctuary got orders from me to reinforce the 94th scouts, who were hotly engaged, but, seeing the enemy turning our flank, he might, under the altered crisis, have used his own discretion and reoccupied the hill he had just left.'

On the 15th January the Lady Superior of the Lovett House, sister of Bishop Jolivet, died; and about this date an unpleasant incident is recorded, that of a volunteer being dismissed the force by sentence of court-martial, and ordered to perform menial work, for having been guilty of cowardice in the face of the enemy at the fight at the Swartkop. Two of his comrades charged with a like offence were found 'not guilty.' To vary the monotony of life in camp, came a strike of the civil doctors for higher pay. These gentlemen were offered a guinea a day, with free board and rations for themselves and their families, with liberty to take such private practice as was not incompatible with their duties to the Government. The strike was, fortunately for the reputation of the profession, not of a protracted nature.

On the 23d January Captain Anderson was slightly wounded by the enemy while patrolling to Wonderboom Poort, where a slight brush with the enemy took place.

Shortly after this, one company of the Pretoria volunteers refused to do duty, their grievance being that the duty was unequally distributed. The whole of the men were placed under arrest. The result was that the services of Captain Palmer were dispensed with, and discipline was restored.

On the 7th February Colonel Gildea made a reconnaissance to Wonderboom Poort.

News received from Rustenburg by the Administrator was of an encouraging nature, and it was the first reliable news from the world outside Pretoria received, except the official reports of Joubert, duly sent in, but promptly disbelieved by every one in the capital.

On the 12th February the Pretoria force suffered a second defeat,—this time an unmistakeable one,—whereof the records given are so confused that it is difficult to make out anything but the fact that it was a repulse. From several informants who took an active part in the fight, I learnt the following particulars, which I believe form a correct narrative of the affair:—At one o'clock in the morning the mounted volunteers, Carbineers, and Nourse's Horse received orders to act as advance guard to the force leaving camp. Some of their number were told off to escort the two 9-pounders. Mule wagons conveyed the infantry to the scene of the fight, and two ambulance wagons were taken with the party. Arriving at the six-mile spruit, Nourse's Horse were sent forward to reconnoitre a house and farm on the other side. The way being clear, the guns advanced, escorted by Nourse's men, and, leaving the road on the left, proceeded over the veldt towards the Red House farm, some two miles distant, whilst D'Arcy's corps kept a mile ahead. The mule-wagons with the infantry followed, but at such a distance that a halt had twice to be called by the officer in charge of the guns to allow the infantry to come up. To arrive at the Red House Kraal farm, which is on the summit of a hill, our men had first to traverse a dip or hollow. D'Arcy's Horse, on nearing the farm, were now engaged with the enemy, skirmishing in amongst the thorns and bush, which is plentiful around this spot. This fighting took place before the guns arrived. When they came within range, twelve of Nourse's Horse and the remainder of the troop went to the support of D'Arcy's Carbineers, and engaged the Boers on the left of the guns. Some of our men being wounded, one of the ambulance wagons advanced, and was actually taken in front of our fighting line, and very soon was fired on. Some of our men, who mistook it for a Boer wagon, also fired on it; and it is quite as probable that the occupants were wounded by our own fire as by that of the Boers. Nothing can be made of the charge, therefore, that the Boers fired on the ambulance. Advancing to a koppie within 900 or 1000 yards of the guns, the Boers began to pick off our men there. Our infantry were not yet brought into action, and before they had fired a shot, they were also fired on while they were at the wagons which had brought them out to the fight. At this juncture the Boers were getting bolder and bolder; one of their bullets struck Colonel Gildea in the hindquarters, incapacitating him. A good deal of confusion now prevailed. A civilian took the order to some of the advanced skirmishers, who were holding their own under cover of trees, to retire. This they refused to do, because to retire meant to be shot down by the enemy. The 21st men then were ordered to retire, and they did so under fire of the enemy the while. The guns were also withdrawn, and D'Arcy's men and Nourse's Horse stood the brunt of the action, still returning the fire of the enemy, and showing a bold front as inch by inch they fell back. But for the volunteers the guns must have been lost, so one sergeant of artillery admitted to me; and the Boers themselves, as well as the volunteers, stoutly assert the same. Covered by Nourse's Horse and the Carbineers, under Lieutenant Walker, the infantry reached the six-mile spruit, never having fired a shot. Major le Mesurier, R.E., with the volunteers, checked the advance of the enemy, the artillery also doing good service in covering the retreat.

That the Boers fought us on ground of their own choosing that day is certain, for as the column moved from Pretoria the Boers rode parallel with it a considerable distance, fully aware of our movements. The Red House Kraal fight is another amongst too numerous instances of our side being out-generalled.

That the Boers had spies in Pretoria during the whole of the siege—very effective spies—is vouched for by a gentleman to whom a man suspected of being a spy, and imprisoned on that suspicion, confessed that whilst even in gaol he sent out information to the enemy. One of our men, taken prisoner by the Boers, had shown to him a photograph of the officers of one of the corps, which photograph had only been taken in Pretoria a day or two previously. The man with the photograph said it had been passed round the Boer lines. Their men knew all these officers now by sight, and would pick them off. In the early part of the siege two Kaffirs under sentence of death were hanged at the prison, with the usual secrecy attaching to such punishment now-a-days. The Boers had the news immediately, but distorted into the shape of 'two Boers' instead of two Kaffirs.

During the siege there were several false alarms of the enemy's approach to attack the town. One night during a thunderstorm the lightning struck a house and fired it, an incident that was at once credited to the Boers.

The Bishop of Pretoria had a somewhat eventful journey up to Pretoria. Between Heidelberg and Pretoria he was allowed to pass without interference, till he arrived close to the city, and then the Boers, intercepting him, wanted him to give a promise in writing that he would not bear arms against the South African Republic. His Lordship refused to give any such undertaking, and his obstinacy was too much for the Boers, so they let him proceed. The cathedral here is a very unpretentious brick building. It was at first proposed that it should be used as a stronghold in which the ladies of the town should take shelter, but the scheme to gather every one within the camp area saved the building from being devoted to this secular purpose.

The remaining incidents of the investment, and the raising of the siege, I take from the *News of the Camp*, a journal published in Pretoria during the siege by Mr. Charles Du Val and Mr. Deecker, under 'supervision':—

'March has been more than usually eventful in history, ancient and modern, and on the 15th of that month a large party of the enemy, with a train of some forty-five wagons,—a standard reared from the leading one,—were seen crossing the veldt, some seven miles west of Pretoria, and moving towards a nek on the mountain range, at the left extremity of which was previously fought the action of Elandsfontein Ridge. They roughly fortified the position they had chosen, and the same afternoon sent in the bearer of a flag of truce, who carried the unwelcome intelligence of the death of Sir George Colley, as also details of the various engagements which had taken place in Natal, and were published in the Boer Government *Gazette*. They also carried an issue of the Free State *Express*, and a copy of the Armistice Treaty made between Sir Evelyn Wood and Commandant-General Joubert; but as this latter document was not endorsed, or in any way apparently authorized by the British authorities in Natal, much doubt was expressed as to its authenticity, or concerning the reverses sustained by our forces in Natal and Sir George Colley's death. These doubts were set at rest on the 23d March, when a portion of a Diamond Fields *Advertiser*, bearing date March 1, reached the hands of the Government, with the indisputable announcement of all these unhappy events. As a consequence the flags of the garrison were hung half-mast high, and all the usual outward tokens of respect paid to the memory of the late High Commissioner of Natal and the Transvaal.

'An arrangement was made with the Boer Commandant of the new laager at the west of Pretoria, that all unsealed letters of a purely private character would be passed through and forwarded, which resulted in a considerable flood of correspondence having to undergo supervision, and being passed forward for similar scrutiny from the Dutch point of vantage.

'On Saturday, the 26th March 1881, we completed the one hundredth day of our investment, as the communications may be said to have been cut on the 16th December 1880 when the Republic was declared paramount at Heidelberg. Next day, the 27th March, by arrangement with the enemy, the wives and families of Messrs. Bok and Jorissen, the State Secretary and Attorney-General of the Boer Government, left Pretoria, where they had remained from the commencement of hostilities. These ladies were offered conveyance and safe-conduct passes to Heidelberg on the day martial law was proclaimed in Pretoria, but elected to remain; and it is as well that this fact should be fully known, based as it is upon the emphatic statement of the garrison Commandant himself, misconstruction having been generated by the fact of these ladies remaining during the investment. The orderly officer who escorted them to the Boer lines returned bearing a written communication (again unconfirmed by British authority) from the Boer Commandant, to the effect that peace had been proclaimed provisionally, and the statement was accepted as probable, though much indignation was pretty freely expressed that terms were arranged without any consultation with the governing authorities at Pretoria; and it was, to say the least, somewhat discourteous that from the beginning of the year no official communication whatever was received by them from the "powers" that were in Natal.

'The 28th of March and the following days will be long remembered in Pretoria by those of its present population who are likely to remain therein, for on the evening of the first of these days three officers, Lieutenants Cuninghame and Menzies of the 92d, and Ryder of the 60th Rifles, rode into camp bearing despatches containing the terms arranged between Sir Evelyn Wood and Joubert, the Boer Commandant-General.

'Next day a Gazette Extraordinary announced them, and when it became known that the Boer terms had been accepted, almost without reservation, or a blow struck for the vindication of our arms, curses both loud and deep were heard on every side, and strong men, whose feet never hesitated or whose pulses wavered when the word "forward" sounded in their ears, were seen to shed tears on learning the intelligence, deemed at once so disappointing and humiliating. It has not been the province of this journal to enter upon the political aspect of the questions at issue—your correspondent may do so at some future time; but this may be said, that the right or wrong of annulling the annexation was wafted to the winds, and the chief desire of the people, the volunteers, and the military, was to be permitted to wipe out the defeats and avenge the brave fellows who had fallen at Bronkhurst Spruit and on the Drakensberg, and those who had paid their last forfeit defending the garrison towns of the Transvaal, who in many cases suffered deep privations ere they fell. This discontented feeling seemed to grow as the day wore on, and evening saw something very like a demonstration from the mounted volunteers, who burned an effigy of the Prime Minister of England, scattering his well-petroleumed carcase to the winds, to the serious danger of that mass of tents and huts which went to make up the temporary abode of the inhabitants and defenders of Pretoria; and thus was brought to a termination the memorable beleaguerment of a hundred days in the year of 1880–81.'

The arrival of Sir Evelyn Wood in Pretoria was the signal for a Governor's salute, and on the following day the troops in the garrison were paraded, and His Excellency paid a very high compliment to the 21st Regiment. The 94th, he remarked, by comparison with the 21st Scots Fusiliers, had done nothing; and then there was fierce heart-burning the rest of the day. I heard more than one officer of the 94th threaten to resign. I was informed on very good authority, that during the siege of Pretoria, Colonel

Gildea received a threatening letter, headed in the orthodox fashion, with a death's head and cross-bones, a coffin, and other emblems of mortality. The writer of it was never discovered, but the 94th men, putting two and two together, came to the conclusion that one of their number had written that letter; that Colonel Gildea was annoyed at being the recipient of it, and that their conduct, as reported to General Wood, was not described in as good a light as they could have wished in consequence.

The same day that the parade of the regulars was held, Sir Evelyn addressed the irregulars who helped to defend Pretoria. They were mustered in front of Government House, a rough, hardy-looking set of men. Accompanied by His Excellency Sir Owen Lanyon, Colonel Bellairs, and Major Fraser, Sir Evelyn thanked the men for the excellent work they had done, and singled out the Carbineers for a special word of praise and sympathy on account of the heavy losses they had sustained. Cheers were given by the men for their Excellencies, and hearty groans, loud and deep, for the Liberal Government. Some few discontented ones interrupted slightly the proceedings by crying out 'bunkum!' and other derisive notes of exclamation; and there were not a few Boer sympathizers conspicuous by their absence from the ranks. Captain le Mesurier, who is a great favourite, was at the conclusion of the meeting hoisted on the shoulders of the men and carried triumphantly to the European Hotel for refreshments.

His Excellency Sir Evelyn Wood, before leaving for Newcastle, received a deputation from a committee of an association 'favourable to English rule in the province,' of which Mr. Farrell, surveyor—one who was engaged in surveying the route of the proposed Delagoa Railway—is secretary. I may say of this association that it was formed in answer to a circular sent out to landholders, farmers, property owners, and merchants in Pretoria and outlying districts, which brought a goodly number of gentlemen to this town, when the news spread that the Transvaal was to be given back to the Boers. They held a meeting and elected a committee, to see, in the first place, if anything could be done to 'rescind the present decision of the Government, as far as giving back the Transvaal is concerned'; and to represent as strongly as possible before the Royal Commission what the result, as it appeared to them, would be of the Transvaal coming again under Boer rule; and if necessary, to take their case to that higher tribunal, the

British public and House of Commons. The points submitted by the deputation to His Excellency were:—1. The deputation wish to represent to His Excellency the necessity of having sittings of the proposed Royal Commission in Pretoria, and to ask him to use his influence for this end. The deputation urged several reasons why the Royal Commission should be held here. 2. The deputation asks His Excellency if he is able to inform them of the nature and extent of the Royal Commission, to guide the association in appearing before the same, more particularly as to the following matters: (1) Can the Commission receive protests against the withdrawal of English rule, and petition for its continuance, or give evidence of the consequences likely to result from the withdrawal? (2) Will the Commission receive claims for damages arising from—(*a*) Occurrences during the late outbreak? (*b*) Damage and depreciation arising from same? (*c*) Ditto from withdrawal of English rule? 3. The deputation wish to ascertain the method of procedure of the Commission, and the action to be adopted by parties appearing before the same. 4. The deputation wish to ascertain if His Excellency will forward by telegraph, if necessary, a statement to Her Majesty's Government which will be submitted to him tomorrow morning.

In reply, Sir Evelyn Wood informed the deputation (I am now quoting the information of the secretary as given to me) that he was really without information, and that the only thing he could say was that every just claim would receive our consideration; and the only two points which he seemed to be able to give any definite replies to were these: That the deputation had succeeded in impressing him with the necessity for the Commission sitting in Pretoria, and that he would be willing to forward the substance of any statement made by them to the Home Government.

The following heads are furnished to me by the secretary of the association, as fairly representing the position they take up:—We say that in 1877 the country was annexed for Imperial purposes, as clearly stated in Sir Theo. Shepstone's proclamation; that Sir Owen Lanyon, that Sir Bartle Frere, and that Sir Garnet Wolseley have in succession declared that the country was English territory, and would be kept so. Finally, that the present Ministry declared through their representative here that British supremacy would be maintained, and gave the same reply to a memorial which was forwarded from the loyal inhabitants of the province.

That every one of these declarations was followed by a distinct rise in all and every kind of property, and in consequence of these promises, people invested to a very large extent; that capital was brought into the country; that merchants and professional men were induced to settle here; that any act of the Government of the Transvaal that may have caused the outbreak was entirely outside the Boer people residing in it, as no voice was permitted them, and that therefore the Government being purely Imperial, all their acts are solely the result of Imperial policy. That when the outbreak occurred, a proclamation of the Governor, Sir Owen Lanyon, distinctly declared it rebellion, and called on all loyal subjects to aid in quelling it; that this call was generally responded to; that, in consequence, those who have still to reside in the country have been placed in a position of antagonism to their neighbours, and they have experienced, in consequence of their response and loyalty, personal losses in property, and in some cases have suffered personal wrong and outrage. That, in addition, all their investments have been depreciated, if not made valueless; and that those who came here and gave the benefit of personal labour and professional skill and knowledge to the country have, practically, their occupations taken from them. That they consider that these points form a fair ground for consideration for Imperial compensation, if they are not sufficient to induce the Home Government to reconsider its decision as regards the giving back of the country to the Boers.

Amongst other deputations which waited on His Excellency Sir Evelyn Wood during his brief stay in Pretoria, was one of Kaffir chiefs. Majato was one of the foremost of these. He is a powerful chief, inhabiting the Rustenburg district, and proved his loyalty to the British at the time of the late Secocoeni war by doing good service against that miscreant or much injured man, whichever you prefer to consider him. Of firearms, if I am correctly informed, Majato and his followers have a good supply. His men have obtained them in a legitimate way at the Diamond Fields. The mission of Majato and others was to obtain from the fountainhead some enlightenment as to the present situation, or rather the future situation; and respectfully they inquired of His Excellency on this point. Sir Evelyn explained matters to them to the extent he has explained them to white people. The Kaffirs listened in silence, and seemed thoroughly to understand the situation, for when on the point of leaving they quietly remarked, 'When the British have left the country, then we will begin.' Whether they will redeem their promise remains to be seen. The opinion of well-informed men here is that they assuredly will. As the outcome of the other deputation to His Excellency, another petition is now on its way to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

One gets sick and tired of hearing the question repeatedly asked, 'What is going to be the climax to the present policy of Great Britain?' Amongst the Boers—the old men—there is, I am told by one who has moved amongst them, a certain amount of uneasiness and misgiving. They comfort each other, saying, 'Let us wait a bit and see what comes.' They chuckle over the point they have scored. They know that, had our troops in front of the Nek, and our garrisons in the various towns held by us, only kept their respective positions without firing one shot, the Boer army would have dwindled away; that they would have trekked to the bush veldt, and ours would have been a bloodless victory. From one who was forced *nolens volens* to fight against us,—one of the army besieging Pretoria,—I am told that 150 men had already deserted the Boer commando before the armistice was heard of, and that the remainder were seriously contemplating deserting *en masse*, so sick and tired were they of the work, so urgent were the calls of their families to come and save them from starvation.

The wounded from Bronkhurst Spruit, and other wounded in this camp, were despatched in wagons under the charge of Captain Anton, of the 94th, to Newcastle. Previous to the peace, they were kept under charge of a Boer commandant at the scene of action. Before they started they were paraded—a sad sight, the crippled and maimed, but all seemed to put a cheerful face on their misfortunes. In presence of the assembled troops in garrison, the colours of the 94th, brought from the battlefield by Mr. Egerton, were handed over to Captain Campbell's company.

An act of indemnity, it is anticipated, will be the first piece of the legislation of the Boer Government after the report of the Royal Commission has been promulgated. How else is indemnity to be given? The world's money-lenders will want some better security than they can ever get from the Transvaal. Will those Boers who refused to be taxed by the British Government, and who fought and shed their blood to gain the point, consent to pay taxes to their own Government? Has there been in the last year or two any radical revolution in the Boer nature which has transformed him into a cheerful taxpayer? Has the accession to their ranks of a few more Hollanders—men who are for a small consideration willing to direct the affairs of the State—created such a revulsion of feeling? I do not believe it, because I know that during the war, when the Republic was pressed for funds, and an attempt was made to collect a tithe of arrears of taxes due by Boers to the old Republic, men openly refused to pay one farthing. I imagine that any attempted rule of the Transvaal by Holland would prove a failure. I do not believe there is anything in common between the Boer and the immigrant Hollander of to-day; their natures are far as the poles asunder. The thin end of the wedge is as yet only inserted, and does not show much effect; as later on it works its body in, we shall probably see a new development, a new phase to the Transvaal question.

With Sir Evelyn Wood went Sir Owen Lanyon from the Transvaal, Colonel Bellairs being left to rule the country for the last six months of its tenure under British authority.

I had heard so much of the defence of Potchefstrom whilst at Pretoria, that I determined to visit that place, and I found that a visit well repaid the labour of the journey.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SIEGE OF POTCHEFSTROM.

GIVEN a well-informed companion, a journey from Pretoria to Potchefstrom is not a disagreeable occupation, and I was fortunate in having Mr. Nelson of Potchefstrom for a companion on this occasion. There are, it is true, areas to be traversed *en route* which are wild and desolate, trackless and treeless, melancholy and monotonous; sunburnt plains without landmark of any kind, and apparently without limit—the monotony of which force the traveller to reflect on his past life, and wonder what crime he has committed that he should be condemned to travel such horrid solitudes; but the road from Pretoria to the future capital of the Transvaal is really a pleasant and entertaining one compared with the roads of the Transvaal generally, or that portion of them with which I can claim acquaintance.

After extracting yourself from Pretoria,—I use the word advisedly, as it is only by imitating the course of a corkscrew that you can leave that city,—you have not far to go now (this was written from Potchefstrom on the 14th of April 1881) before you find evidence of the hand of war. A deserted building, which once was a store, occupied by a gentleman named Coles, is the first object which reminds you you are passing through a country lately in an enemy's hands. Mr. Coles carried some despatches from Potchefstrom to Pretoria during the war, was chased by the Boers, but escaped. The enemy therefore vented their rage on his dwelling. This store is situated near the well-timbered farm of one of that legion in the Transvaal named Erastus. The charred walls are all that remain of this commercial house. The next monument of Dutch displeasure is the abandoned roadside inn and store of Messrs. Koch and Dearing. The contents of the building have been pillaged—commandeered, if you prefer the milder term; carrion crows, verily birds of ill-omen in this case, have taken possession of the place, and their tenancy is likely to be undisputed. The Yokeskey River, some miles farther on, offers at present no attraction to the traveller. 'No accommodation' is plainly written over the portals of those houses which once gave shelter to Englishmen on the road. The Dutch are in possession of everything here; and if you were to go down on your knees and pray of them for one bundle of forage for your horse, the appeal would be as useless as one made for personal accommodation for yourself. It was in this hospitable quarter that a friend of mine applied recently for shelter at night, and the charitable people, touched to the heart by his sad plight,—a benighted traveller with a horse knocked up,—warmed towards the stranger, and permitted his beast and himself to sleep in what they were pleased to call 'the stable.' For my own part, I would, judging from my experience of Dutch houses in the Transvaal, as soon sleep in the stable as in the family mansion, for I find that sleep is next to impossible when one has an army of insects—fleas is the vulgar name for these tormentors, I believe—performing a march of marionettes over you. On the banks of the Yokeskey River gold has been found, and may be found at this day, but as yet not in quantities which would repay the labour of searching for it. At the second post-cart station from Pretoria there is almost a village, so numerous are the houses, but the village is a deserted one. Not until you arrive at Stadtfontein can you obtain civility and shelter from any of the inhabitants of the Transvaal living on the roadside. At Stadtfontein is the house of Mr. O. Jacoby, a practitioner of surgery and the healing art. His services for the wounded were given to the Boers during the war, and I hear he had a very busy time of it, amputating a limb here and dressing a wound there. I was shown a circular letter addressed to the storekeepers who have stayed by their property during the war. It was as follows:—

'LAAGER PLATZ, BRAKFONTEIN, *March* 24, 1881.

'SIR,—I beg to inform you, by order of Commandant-General Joubert, I have received instructions to notify that in all stores, goods must not now be sold for higher prices than they were before the war, and that any storekeeper disregarding this notice will have his store closed. I beg, therefore, to give you friendly notice that you must be cautious, and further warn you *to be quiet and not interfere with politics.*

'D. P. PRETORIUS, Assistant Commandant.'

Remember the date of the agreement of peace, and digest this document with the statement of General Joubert, that free trade principles would be amongst the lines followed by the new Government of the Transvaal.

From Mr. O. Jacoby, who is a German, the Boers commandeered coffee, sugar, and wearing apparel. From a neighbour of his, Mr. W. H. Saunders, they took nothing whatever, although he refused to let his son fight against the English. The absence of regularity, system, or government was conspicuous on the Boer side, even in the matter of commandeering during the war. Had the tax been evenly distributed, it would not have fallen so hard on that proportion of the inhabitants who had to contribute to the chest of the Republic. Without rhyme or reason, certain men were exempted whilst others had to pay the penalty of faith in the British Government; and it was not only those who openly avowed their faith in the British who were visited by the commandeering parties. Without distinction of political creed, men were ordered to pay a quota to the common fund; and, on the other hand, without regard to a political creed or nationality, other men were allowed to pursue their vocations without being asked for a farthing.

At the Crocodile or Limpopo River is a store where a man named Malcolm was murdered by some Boers at the commencement of hostilities. The owners of this store are Messrs. Anderson and Edgson. Mr. Edgson gave me the following information :—

'The meeting of the Boers at Paarde Kraal was within a short distance of my place of business at Riet Spruit, and I came into Pretoria and had an interview with His Excellency Sir Owen Lanyon, and told him what I had heard of their plans. Among other information I gave to His Excellency, was the intelligence that I had heard a number of Boers were to be sent to intercept the 94th Regiment. When I heard this news I immediately rode in and communicated it to Sir Owen Lanyon. He appeared to me to make light of the matter, saying that the 94th would be ready for anything of that sort, or words to that effect. I asked him what protection there would be for loyal Boers and myself in the district in which I lived, if the Boers rose. He answered in general terms that we should have every protection. I asked him if it would be advisable for me to remove my goods. He answered, "Decidedly not. If you lose a shilling, you receive two for it." I told him that

I knew there were many Boers living near me who were disinclined to take part in rebellion against the British, and that if they did join any party of rebels, it would be through intimidation. In fact, I brought into town with me two Boers who said they did not wish to join the others and fight. His Excellency suggested there should be a meeting called at my house at Riet Spruit, and I agreed. Mr. Melville, the Surveyor-General, and Mr. John Joubert, member of the Legislative Council, came out to it. This would be about the 11th or 12th of December. At the meeting, which was attended by about thirty Boers, in spite of the short notice given, a resolution was passed that we all should remain perfectly still, and would not take part with either side if it came to blows, unless we were molested by the Boers, in which case we would apply to the British Government for protection. It was Mr. Melville who told me that finally my house had been appointed as the place of meeting. I came into Pretoria to buy goods some time after this, and while I was in the town martial law was proclaimed, and I was obliged to stay there. During my absence, my store, so my partner says, has been pillaged, and a large quantity of goods wilfully destroyed. A man by the name of Malcolm has also been murdered here by the Boers. Five or six days ago I went to Sir O. Lanyon and reminded him of his promise. He said, "I have no power now; the matter will have to be gone into by the Royal Commission." When I told him about the murder of the man Malcolm, and also about the murder of some Kaffirs by the Boers, His Excellency seemed most anxious to know if any Kaffirs had been shot, and said that any evidence we had of such an occurrence must be borne in mind.'

Mr. Anderson states: 'I am a German by birth. I was through the Secocoeni war as a sergeant-major in Ferreira's Horse. Since then I have been in partnership with Mr. Edgson as storekeeper at Riet Spruit. I have always been friendly with the Boers, my neighbours there. I can speak their language well, and was not aware until lately that I had any enemies amongst them, as I am unconscious of ever having given one of them offence. On the night of December 20, 1880, there was staying in my house Mr. Bower, George Garret (now in the Pretoria police), William Rumble, and A. Malcolm. The last-mentioned is a mason by trade, from Glasgow, who had been jobbing about the country for some time, and was well known to the Boers. Two of the other visitors were also masons. I went to bed, leaving Malcolm in the sitting-room.

He was resting his head on his hands, with his elbows on the table. The men were on "shake-downs." About one o'clock next morning I was awakened by the noise of men entering the house. I found three armed men at my bedside, Hendrick Pretorius, Hans Cornelius, and Barend Vorster. The first-mentioned had his gun pointed at me; my rifle was hanging in a sling on the wall within my reach, but I saw it would be folly for me to take it down. Cornelius (whom I saw in Pretoria yesterday walking about with a revolver slung round his neck) asked me where my ammunition was, saying that he had orders to take every grain of powder I had in the place. He took from the table thirty rounds of Westley-Richards. I offered no resistance, and gave him permission to search the place —in fact, unlocked every box in the place for his inspection. I found that there were three more Boers accompanying the party who came into my room, viz. Ewry Schiepers, Hans Schiepers, and Jacob Smit; but Hans Cornelius said he was captain of the party, and had been sent by his Government to search for ammunition and spies. First they asked, "Where is Edgson?" and when I told them he was away in Pretoria, they said with an oath it was a good job for him he was away, for they intended to knock him over for harbouring spies. It is true that men sent out by the Government to ascertain what the Boers were doing had stopped at our place, as any other person on the road might, as ours is an hotel. After I had opened the boxes for their inspection, I went to the bar and helped each of the Boers to a glass of brandy, and being asked by Pretorius to take a glass "as a friend, and drink their healths," I did so. They did not pay for this liquor. Pretorius began to pull the ready-made clothing off the shelves, saying it was time there was an end made of "these d——d Englishmen," who came only to rob and plunder the country. He added that war was proclaimed, and we outsiders would be shot, and again he pointed his gun at me. The other Boers asked me for sacks. Bower and I gave them twelve, and, after pulling all the things off the shelves, they filled the sacks with as many goods as they could stuff into them. After this they began drinking again, and got very abusive. They smashed the crockery and other articles. A mare belonging to Mr. Edgson, worth forty guineas, they fastened to one of the post-horses which they had brought from the post-stable a few miles distant. I went and was about to let the mare loose when Jacob Smit threatened to shoot me. Pretorius also threatened to shoot me, and I went on the verandah. There I saw Hans Schiepers guarding the horses. He said to me, "Look here, Anderson, if you go into the shop again you will be shot." Meanwhile the Boers inside abused the men there. Garret and Rumble were severely kicked by the Boers; afterwards they made their escape from the premises. Pretorius struck at Bower first with his fist, and then with a spade. Pretorius has since been killed, I believe at the fight of Skheyns Hoogte; perhaps it is better I should say nothing about him as he is dead now. The Boers said several times, "Where are your spies?" Smit took hold of Malcolm, who had never said a word to them or given them any provocation, and pulled him off the chair on which he was sitting on to the ground. Then they upset the table on top of him, and jumped on the table; then moved the table, and kicked him in the stomach and head. They had spurs on, and with these they jobbed him in the face. Malcolm seemed insensible. Smit took hold of him by the legs and dragged him on to the stoep or verandah, and then to the ground down the steps in front of the house. It was raining a drizzling rain at the time. There they left him, and I went and felt over his face; it was cold, and I could not feel his heart beating. I thought he was dead, and returning to the house, said to Jacob Smit, "The man you kicked just now is dead"; "Let the brute die," was the answer I got. Turning to Cornelius, who could speak English well, I said, "You have been always well received and treated as a friend in my house more than once. I don't see what cause you have to treat me in this manner." He replied, "You had better shut up"; it was said in a threatening manner, and not in a friendly way to warn us of danger. Hans Schiepers afterwards, in a friendly way, advised me to leave the place as soon as I could. At the same time I heard Smit and Pretorius inquiring for me, so I made tracks for the nearest bush on the banks of the river. I may say I had been out on the previous day looking for my partner, as the wagon had arrived without him. I had ridden three hours' journey towards Pretoria and back, and I had also gone to the store of Messrs. Koch and Dearing at Knoppes Laagte. There I heard that my partner had gone back to Pretoria. I had also called at the Kilton Hotel, a place belonging to us, six miles on the Pretoria side of Riet Spruit, and which is the post-cart station from which the Boers had taken horses. I noticed, while on this journey, that the Boers, armed, were patrolling the roads, but they did not interfere with me then, and I had no knowledge of what had occurred at Potchefstrom, or that war was declared. I lay hidden in the bush for three-quarters of an hour, during which time I heard four or five shots fired in the direction of my store. I forgot to mention I heard Smit say, before I made my escape, "It is a shame to have people say that that man (referring to Malcolm) was kicked to death—a ball through his head would look better." Vorster said, 'What shall we do with that lot of Mulders over the way?" One of the Schiepers said, "Oh, leave them alone." Pretorius interposed, "Let us burn their houses and we shall hear them cry out." Pretorius once, when he pointed his gun at my head, said, "You are the mate of an Englishman, and you must die." Vorster, who had owed us a small sum of money, remarked, "We have bought long enough with money, we shall try what we can buy without it now." Smit once pointed his gun at Bowers' breast, but Bowers knocked up the muzzle, and the ball went through the iron roof. After that Bowers made his escape, though two shots were fired at him as he fled. When the Boers left I returned to the house. I found Malcolm outside, where the Boer Smit had dragged him. He was still alive, but could not speak. On examining him I found a bullet wound in his head. The ball had entered at the right ear and came out through the left temple, just above the eye. I did all I could to resuscitate him, but he remained insensible till ten o'clock in the morning, when he died. In the store I found a coat smouldering on the counter; the mark of the fire is still there. I found also that the Boers had left behind them a cord coat and black felt hat, which Pretorius had been wearing, a cloth coat that Vorster had been wearing, a tobacco pouch with the initials "B. J. V.," and a leather belt. In the roof were three bullet-holes. Groceries and other stores had been thrown about and damaged wilfully, as oil had been thrown into rice and sugar, etc.; the shelving holding the crockery had been wrenched out; the whole place was in confusion. As I happened to hear during their stay that the Boers intended to serve Mr. L. Geldenhuis in the same way, I sent word to warn him. At the Killin Hotel the Boers took the horses belonging to Mr. G. Coulson, £3 in money, and destroyed and drank a quantity of liquor. Vorster on the 23d December went to the hotel and made Bam the clerk there give him some articles "on credit," or threatened to take what he wanted. I buried the body of Malcolm the same day that he died. About thirty Boers came and witnessed the funeral and the state of my store. Not knowing what would happen, I gave information to the veldt cornet L. Albert, and he came and took my evidence in Dutch, and promised he would do his best to have the matter investigated. I believe the Boers who came and robbed my store and murdered Malcolm were subsequently arrested and sent to Heidelberg, but were liberated on parole. I know that I may be molested if I give this evidence publicly, but I do not care, I owe it to the poor man they killed. Of course I shall leave the country, and you may depend upon it I never shall fight for the British again. I wish now I had accepted the captaincy offered me in Ferreira's Horse. The Boers during the war commandeered things from the store; they took amongst other property 8500 bundles of forage. I know that they looted Koch's place; he had got warning of their intention to visit him, and cleared out. I reckon our losses at about £2000; this comes upon me just as I was beginning to get on, having saved a little money with which to start business. At Mr. Bissett's house, at Brand Vlei, there is a Kaffir, one of five, belonging to the Makapansis tribe, who were on their way home in the Waterburg district from the Fields. The Boers met this party, so the Kaffir says, took their money from them, and shot all but himself. He only escaped through being mounted and obtaining the protection of Mr. Bissett. The Boers visited the house and took the Kaffir's horse.'

This murder was one of several which the Boers committed in cold blood, and which deservedly called forth severe censure. These crimes were the acts of a few individuals, it is true, but in no one case has one of the murderers been brought to justice, in spite of the promises of the Triumvirate.

It is difficult to account for the disgusting behaviour of some of the Boers compared with the generous and gentlemanly acts of others, unless the origin of the low and brutal element is to be found in the infusion of black blood; for the Boers have to some extent intermixed with the natives of the country.

Around the sources of the Crocodile, which are found in the Witwaters Rand, are many farms where agriculture is extensively practised. For the most part the people in that locality are from the Old Colony, and there the feeling has been against the restitution of the country to the Transvaal Boers. There are at all events numerous instances in which the farmers here sent their sons away at the commencement of hostilities to prevent them being forced into the Boer ranks.

The Witwaters Rand is the watershed from which on the one side the streams find an outlet east, whilst on the other every brook and rivulet makes its way to the western ocean. The road from Pretoria to Potchefstrom runs along the base of this range of hills, and a splendid view is presented to the traveller. It was here that the great meeting of Boers was held, where the die for war was cast; and an admirable spot it is for any gathering of men who would be free from interruption. Rocky and precipitous, the approaches to the range are few and difficult of access, and Paarde Kraal, the precise locality where the Boers congregated, is surrounded with obstacles to the advance of any body of troops.

The arrangements of the Boers to guard against surprise seem to have been excellent. Their system of patrols and outposts was one that any general might imitate with advantage. No one could stir from his house—unless he was a Boer and was hand-and-glove with the movement—without his actions being watched and his business promptly ascertained. Every attempt of loyal men to communicate intelligence to those who were in want of it was frustrated by the vigilance of the enemy; and it is surprising how many Englishmen and loyal Boers there were located in this district. These are the men who seem to feel most acutely the difficulties of their present position. They, that is, Englishmen as well as Boers, say with truth, 'We had been living here contented under the rule of the Boers, when the British Government, unsolicited, came and annexed the country. We did not want the British Government, but when it did come we were pleased to find that we had been taken under its rule, as we anticipated a rapid increase in the value of our products and in the wealth of the country. Our opinions favourable to the British Government are known to our neighbours of anti-British feelings, and now, when the British retire, they leave us with a hornet's nest raised about our ears. We shall be the butt of every Republican in the country.' Already I have been told the Boers are making themselves objectionable to this class by their insulting words, and many of the Old Colony Boers have packed up and begun trekking to the Free State and the Cape. There must be some strong reason to impel men who have made their homes here to start for another country.

On the road trudging towards the Diamond Fields were many parties of Kaffirs, anxious to get the high wages of £3 and £4 a month, which they can easily earn at Kimberley. During the war the path was of course closed to them, and the supply of labour at the fields had been very short. Some of these Kaffirs spoke with bated breath of the Dutchman and his coming rule. We heard from them how Mr. Paul Kruger in the good old times harnessed the Kaffirs to the plough, a tale which is, I believe, well authenticated, although I confess I do not see any particular hardship imposed by such an act, since hand-ploughs are implements still to be seen in countries where civilisation has made even greater strides than in South Africa. The Kaffirs, it is evident, do not love the Dutchman as a master. Along the road at intervals are sheltering places, where the natives rest on their journey, but these of course were deserted.

This side of the Crocodile you enter the wheat-growing district, the tobacco-growing district, in fact, the richest part of the Transvaal. Here the climate is more favourable to the cultivation of cereals than the other side of the Magaliesberg, where sugar and coffee are grown, and which is a district essentially unhealthy compared with other parts of the Transvaal. Every mile of the road is passed in view of cultivated patches, and the traveller, for the first time in his journey from Newcastle, is impressed with the idea that the Transvaal can produce a more valuable crop than that of grass. The probability s that Potchefstrom, being in the centre of this fertile district, will be the city of the future, whilst Pretoria, abandoned by the military, will be deserted by the merchant. Potchefstrom, in fact, is already spoken of by the Boers as the town where they will establish their seat of Government and capital. 'The capital' it has always been to them, whilst they only acknowledged Pretoria as 'the seat of Government.'

Unlike the eastern province of the Cape Colony, this district is not really subject to drought, and in a not very distant future it may become the source of supply for the Cape Colony, if the country is only well governed by its new rulers. During the winter months, from May to August, of course little moisture falls; occasionally they get snowstorms; but on the whole it cannot be called a district subject to drought in the same sense of the word as applied to the eastern province of the adjacent colony. With the help of the right class of immigrants—not merely consumers but producers—and capital, the wealth here latent might be developed to an extent hitherto unthought of.

The right sort of immigrant has not yet been brought to the Transvaal. Of German residents there is a good sprinkling, but they are offshoots of the German legion which in 1852 came to the country; not men who, knowing the Transvaal as a field of immigration, have been recently attracted to it. The English are in the minority; the Boers are supreme as regards numbers. Until they are enlightened and assisted in their agricultural pursuits by a people with more energy and knowledge, their tenure of the soil can never be as profitable to them as by its nature it deserves to be. Even on the roadside there is not wanting evidence of their inclination to follow closely the customs of the ancients. Now and again you come across threshing-floors—the bare level road answers their purpose best. There the sheaves of corn are laid in a circle, and are threshed by either horses or young oxen, driven round and round until the ripened grain is trampled out. Tossing the wheat and chaff in the wind is to a Boer's idea the very best method of winnowing. After these processes, there must of course follow that of washing the grain before it is fit for use. Amongst the more enlightened Boers, there are some who have discovered that it is not impossible to stay on their farms south of the Magaliesberg, and keep their stock alive and in good condition during that period without trekking to the bush veldt; but, taken as a people, the Boers are content to do as their fathers did before them, to follow the same lines, to work in the same grooves, hoping nothing from science or education, but satisfied with the ignorance of past centuries.

Sixty miles of flat veldt forms the next stage on the way to Potchefstrom. Here and there you come across patches of thorn, and on your left is the Vaats Raand or range of caves, but the country is once more singularly uninteresting, as you have left behind the tobacco plantations and mealie gardens. You are now on the highest plateau but one in the Transvaal, which has water in abundance. Wonderfontein is the name of the district, and a wondrous place it is if you have time to examine it. Here and there water springs from the ground, and, forming in large pans or lakes, finds its way into the Mooi River at Potchefstrom, in some instances disappearing underground for miles before it does outflow there. The caves, however, are perhaps the most wonderful of the wonders to be seen there. Many of them have never been explored. In some the followers of the Chief Magalis took shelter from the Zulus when that people overran the country. There they lived and died, the Zulus afraid to force an entrance, and the refugees afraid to come out. So recently as two years ago, lions have been seen in this district following the quagga (zebra), their favourite food. On the subject of lions the Dutch there tell a strange story, which is vouched for as correct by many men now living. It is that some ten or twelve years ago, a troop of lions, having committed serious depredations amongst cattle, the farmers made up a party to hunt the troop, which, however, took refuge in one of the caves. The Boers secured the mouth of the cave with heavy stones, and in three weeks' time returning to the place, they sent some dogs in to 'prospect'; the dogs never came out alive, so the cave's mouth was again closed up, and not visited for the space of two months. Then, when an exploring party entered, they heard a growling, which induced them to beat a retreat, and for the third time the lions were shut in. At the end of another month the cave was again visited. Inside all was quiet; the Boers found one of the lions which had just died, and six others which evidently had been dead some time. The carcases of the dogs were there uneaten.

Nearing Potchefstrom, you pass closely by the house of Bezhuidenot, the gentleman at whose instance the sheriff was interfered with when about to sell a wagon in default of payment of taxes. This farm is some ten miles from Potchefstrom, the rest of the way being over broken country. The town itself is a long straggling place, with plenty of trees and water.

From the Mooi River, which is spanned by a rough bridge, no less than six or seven water mills are supplied in the town, and the stream even in mid-winter has volume enough to irrigate all the gardens in Potchefstrom. There being an abundance of limestone in the vicinity, the houses are all lime-washed or cemented. The size of the town and the substantial nature of many of its buildings make it one of no mean pretensions, as towns go in South Africa. Stagnation of commerce seems to be its principal characteristic at the present moment; and it is not to be wondered at when you hear the tale of woe which every one has to tell. Not one-tenth of the stores or houses of business are opened; bullet-holes disfigure the walls in almost every direction you turn; there is the mark of one in the room I am sitting in at the Royal Hotel. Coming through the window and curtain, it passed through the door sash and frame, and lodged in the passage wall beyond.

A view of the court-house, gaol, and fort gives one an idea of what the defenders of the place had to go through. Nothing could be more ill-conceived than the idea of holding such positions, and the wonder is that the loss of life on our side was not greater than it was. The court-house and gaol are hidden from sight of each other by trees, walls, and houses intervening. The court-house, which is on one side of the Market Square, is right and left surrounded by buildings, under cover of which an enemy could advance to attack it; whilst the Dutch church, planted in the middle of the square, affords splendid cover for an enemy desirous of attacking the seat of justice. At the rear of the court-house are gardens with mud walls, houses, outbuildings, and other shelter, as I have already indicated, ready to hand for any one approaching either gaol or court. The only building which was at all fit by its position to be occupied as a stronghold was the Dutch church, as there is no other building within 200 yards of it. A pity it is that Major Clarke and Commandant Raaf were not permitted to choose that as their fortress; the orders were that the court-house, where is also the post-office, with their musty documents, must be garrisoned. To attempt to garrison and hold it without first blowing up the buildings around, was to invite defeat. Almost at the extreme west end of the town is the Market Place, a fine square of 400 yards, spoilt only by the ungainly cruciform building standing in the centre, and a small hut which did duty as a market-house. I have said that it was an ill-advised affair to attempt to hold the gaol and court-house. This is not one of those statements made in the wisdom of the light of after events; and I do not wish to cast any reflection on those who, in attempting to defend the situation, were only acting under orders. On the shoulders of those who issued such an order the gravest responsibility must rest; disobedience to such an order would have been an act to be applauded, not an offence.

If it was thought that we were to engage at child's play, well and good; but if for one moment war was contemplated, and we were to act the part of men, the Dutch church should have been occupied by our soldiers. It was surely no time for the display of sentiment; no greater feeling of delicacy should be felt in seizing a church than in seizing a gaol, when the lives of men, women, and children depend on the event. When I visited the court-house on the 13th of April, I noticed the South African Republican flag floating from the mast there. I was informed by Mr. Vaneck, who has been requested by the Boers to act as Landdrost for them, that some one since the peace was signed hauled down the flag. No request was made to him to remove the flag, and when he found one morning that it had been hauled down, he had it nailed to the mast-head, and cut away the halliards. There the flag remains at present. The outside of the building is pitted in the front facing the square by at least 300 bullet marks. The glass in the windows is all smashed. The external signs of this having been a very warm corner are unmistakeable. On the entrance door is the following in Dutch and English: 'Notice is hereby given to the public, that a treaty of peace having been entered into, the Landdrost will resume his duties forthwith. The office will be *pro tem.* next to the house of Mr. Daly on the Market Square.—A. M. Goetz, Landdrost, April 1, 1881.' Note the date; it is appropriate. Inside the court-house the postmaster was exercising his functions. The chamber in which he was busy is pitted with bullet marks; so, in fact, is every room in the building as well as the passages. The windows, which are large, were not at first protected as they might have been had there been more time given. The doors, of ordinary soft wood, offered no resistance to the passage of a bullet, and, until they were strengthened by sandbags placed behind them, they afforded no protection whatever to any one behind them. The hall of justice, or court-room proper, was in a strange state of confusion: bench, bar, and dock had been thrust in one corner; the floor dug up to furnish materials for barricades. At the rear of the building in the roof was a good-sized hole, made to allow of a man signalling by flag to the fort. Within ten yards of the court-house is a brick stable on the left, and adjoining the stable is a row of buildings, in continuation of this side of the Market Square; nearest to the stable being the premises of Mr. Buskes, a Hollander, a gentleman who, on the occasion of a recent banquet to Sir Bartle Frere or some other celebrity, if he is correctly reported, deplored the fact that he had no English blood in his veins. This was of course an after-dinner speech. After events have exhibited Mr. Buskes as a follower of the Boers and a prominent adviser of the Republic.

The court-house is situated on the north side of the square;

on the east side is the Cape Commercial Bank. At the corner of the main street, and opposite the bank, is Reid's store. On the west side amongst other houses is the Criterion Hotel, and this was occupied by a party of our men at the time of the outbreak of hostilities, and it commanded Church Street, the principal street of the town, which leads to the Market Square and direct to the Dutch church. Schirkerling's store is on the west side of the square. Thus it will be seen that the court-house on the north, the Criterion Hotel and Schirkerling's store on the west, were the positions held by us, besides the gaol in the rear or farther to the north of the court-house. The fort is in an open piece of ground farther again north-west of the gaol, and quite outside the town, say four or five hundred yards from any houses, and on an elevation above the town; but still the gradient to the fort is so gentle, that from the earthwork nothing like a commanding view can be obtained either of the streets of the town or the roofs even of its houses. So thickly are the streets and gardens studded with willow and other trees, it would be impossible from a point twice as high as the site of the fort to pick out from amongst the verdure any one building.

I mention this to show that Potchefstrom is a town very difficult to command by guns. It is, moreover, a long straggling place, covering fully a mile of ground from the 'Willow Bridge' to the farthest point west. The, flat, again round the town is so extensive that no commanding position within gun-shot can be found outside the four corners of the place. There was therefore no choice in the selection of a site for a fort, and no blame can be attached to the officer who, in command of a handful of men, had to hold his own against superior numbers. To defend the whole of the town was impossible. The idea of occupying the church in the Market Square savoured, I suppose, too much of sacrilege, or probably the position of affairs just before the outbreak of hostilities did not appear so serious as to warrant such an act. When matters came to a crisis, and there was an opportunity of seizing the church, it is a pity that the step was not taken. Of powder there was plenty in the magazine to have mined any buildings in the vicinity, but the surplus powder was destroyed. As regards provisions, the stocks of merchants in their premises around the Market Square would have sufficed for the wants of our garrison, and could have been easily obtained.

To leave what may be considered a useless cry over spilt milk, I will give a few particulars about the gaol. I have already said the approaches to it from all sides, except from the fort, afford every shelter an enemy could desire,—hedgerows, mud walls, trees, and houses. The gaol front has what was, I presume, once a small garden before it, enclosed with the usual mud wall, three or four feet in height, common to gardens in Potchefstrom. By means of sand-bags these walls had been strengthened. The 'tronk' itself forms a quadrangle, the cells opening into the yard at the rear. The walls of the building were, like those of the court-house, covered with bullet marks, which, breaking the outside coating of lime-wash, and penetrating the soft red bricks, have in fact made a ruin of the place. The front door has eight or nine bullet-holes in it. In one of the cells is the following inscription in pencil, written by a Boer—presumably an illiterate one—during their brief tenure of the gaol: 'You poor devils [the English soldiers] thought to do good in this place; but go and see your combrats bones in the back yard. Go to heaven.' Each of the cells had been fired into by musketry, the bullets entering through the narrow iron-barred apertures which serve the purpose of windows. The outer walls facing the fort are broken down in places by the shells fired at the 'tronk' by our guns, whenever the Boers occupied the position after the retreat of our party from it. The garrison of the gaol made good their escape one dark rainy night, when all hope of holding the block had failed. It is but 250 yards from the gaol to the fort, but, owing to the cover the Boers had on three sides of the gaol, it soon became untenable.

Proceeding to the fort and standing on its ramparts, one can realize the misery which its occupants endured. Part of the work has been destroyed by the enemy after the capitulation. A notion prevailed amongst them that the treasure from the banks had been buried here, and they worked diligently for a time to find it. The area of the fort is twenty-five yards square—twenty-five yards square to accommodate 300 souls, with 105 serviceable rifles and two 9-pounders to defend it. There were at first some sixty Kaffirs or Hottentots, drivers and servants, many of whom left the place by choice, not because they were turned out. At the angle of the fort, facing the magazine and gaol, the 9-pounders stood at first, open to the fire of the enemy, as they were really outside the fort. During the night a breastwork was thrown up along the face looking towards the magazine, which is north of the fort, and therefore farther away from the centre of the town. This trench, continued a short distance round the angle where the guns stood, made a kind of gun pit below the natural level of the ground, large enough to give the fifty artillerymen room to lie down in when not on duty. Three embrasures completed the work; but it was some time before this could be accomplished, as our men had to fight all day, and it was only at night that they could handle the pickaxe and shovel. It was rather unfortunate that the guns were placed close together, because when the Boers with their artillery fired on the fort from the opposite side, there was no weapon but the rifle available for answering them. From the original height of two feet the walls of the fort were gradually raised to eight or ten feet, and the depth of the trench outside, from which the material was taken for this work, proportionally deepened. Close to the gun pit water was obtained at a depth of twelve feet at the outset; but when this supply failed, our men, straitened for the precious fluid, had to bore thirty-seven feet before they struck a spring of sufficient volume to meet all requirements, and even this water when obtained was none of the best; welling up as it did through a bed of clay, it always had tasted strongly of that substance. Between the fort and the gaol the fall is twenty-five feet, and the water furrow which supplies the western end of the town, and runs between the fort and the town, was too much exposed to the fire of the Boers for any one to venture to it except after nightfall. Then it was that our cattle were driven down to slake their thirst. When the rain at last fell, in torrents, the fort was ankle-deep in water and mud, as the drainage had not been properly looked after when water was so scarce. The water had to be baled out of both trenches and fort; and as the siege continued, and the area inside the fort had to be cleared, the level of the ground became lower and lower, always increasing the difficulty of artificial drainage. Sacks of mealies, beef tins, biscuit boxes, and other commissariat stores, eked out by sand-bags, formed the crest of the ramparts; but the Boers, as I will show later on, having built a tower or fort fourteen or fifteen feet high on higher ground than our fort, were able to pepper our tents freely. In the upper part of one tent alone 300 bullet-holes were counted after the capitulation. It can be easily understood, then, that the canvas afforded but poor protection from the weather to women and men inside, and wagons drawn up to make a traverse gave only a flimsy shelter from the enemy's bullets. The dismantled fort, strewn with fragments of soldiers' accoutrements, and the little graveyard close by, spoke eloquently of the sufferings which the defenders endured.

As regards the siege, I have already shown how matters at Potchefstrom came to a crisis when, on the 16th December, some Boers fired at our men, and so commenced the war. Immediately after shots had been exchanged in the neighbourhood of the fort, the advance party of the enemy, which had been watching the court-house in the Market Square from the corner of the main street, were warned that if they came into the square they would be fired on. They retired for a while to headquarters, but came back soon, reinforced, thirty or forty of them in all, and boldly entered the square.

Immediately Major Clarke gave the order in the court-house to fire on them, and as soon as fire was opened the enemy took shelter in the best positions they could surrounding the court-house—in Rocher's store, in Reid's store, in the Cape Commercial Bank, at the back of the Landdrost's house, and in other buildings adjoining left and right. The narrative of events regarding the siege of the court-house which follows is as told by Commandant Raaf, C.M.G.:—

'Mr. Goetz, the Landdrost, was not in the court-house with us; he stayed at his own house. The Boers, of course, returned our fire; and for three days the shooting was warm on both sides. When the Boers were gathered at a particular spot in the Market Square, I made a hole in the roof at the back of the court-house, and got a signalman to signal with a flag to the fort their whereabouts, so that they could be shelled, and this was done. The first day of the fight Captain Falls was killed by a bullet passing through the door, and a volunteer named Wood was also killed, and nine of our men were wounded. Finding some post-bags, we filled them with earth, and then put them behind the door. After that we were not so exposed to the enemy's bullets. On the third day the Boers got possession of a stable adjoining the court-house, and then they were not more than twelve yards from us, and, as you may imagine, their fire was very telling, as their bullets came from every side. My attention was shortly afterwards called to the fact that the Boers had got a long reed with an oil-rag attached to it alight, with which they were setting fire to our thatched roof. I told Major Clarke that we were going to be burned alive, or else must surrender. The court-house roof being now actually fired, the place in effect was untenable any longer, and we surrendered, taking care there should be an express stipulation in writing that all our lives should be spared. The fort is about 1000 yards distant from the court-house, and it could not at that time give us the assistance necessary to save the place. At first we had no water, but a well was sunk inside the court-house; we obtained from it water for our wounded, of which there were many, but we had no doctor there to attend them. When we surrendered to Cronje, he told me it was very lucky we had done so, or the place would have been burned down, and any who tried to escape would have been shot down like dogs. We were taken and placed in Forssman's house; and then we found that some of our men who had been stationed at Schirkerling's house and at the Criterion Hotel were prisoners. Included in the prisoners the Boers had, were Dr. Woite and the man Van der Linden, who had acted as scouts before the actual outbreak of hostilities; also two civilians, named Collins and Smith, who had not, however, taken any part in the affray on one side or the other. It seems that the Boers saw these two men in the street trying to get into a house. The Boers fired at them, but missed both. Smith ran, and made his escape, Collins dropped on his face, feigning death, and when the Boers retired he got safely into his house. Eventually they were both captured by the enemy. It was a stipulation, as I have already said, that the lives of all who surrendered should be spared. Dr. Woite and Van der Linden were, however, tried by the Krijgsraad and condemned to death. We saw them pass our prison guarded, and attended by the Dutch minister, Van der Hoff, and Dr. Poortman (a Hollander), and then we heard the shots fired. A half-caste, named Caurolos, was also shot; the Boers gave him "half an hour's grace in which to say his prayers." We saw him also marched past with the firing party.

'After our surrender all the Boer fire was centred on the fort. At first our people held the gaol; but the position was too extended, and under cover of a misty night they retired to the fort. As regards the water supply, the rain was so incessant that the garrison could obtain a plentiful supply without going out to the water furrow. Early in the siege they turned all horses and cattle out; the Boers captured the former, and shot the latter, and their carcases, lying unburied around the fort, made the air very pestilential.

'When we were taken prisoners, and the court-house fell into the Boers' hands, those of our men who had been taken from Schirkerling's house, and those taken from the Criterion Hotel, were tried by a Boer court-martial, and were sentenced to undergo hard labour. When our men evacuated the gaol, the Boers occupied that position, and this brought them to within 700 yards of the fort. Then they began to dig trenches to approach the fort; and the fire from our fort became very hot, so the Boers compelled those of our prisoners they sentenced to hard labour to work in the advanced trenches, making them turn the first sod, and do other perilous work. Four natives and a trooper named Frederick Findlay, a volunteer, were killed by the shells fired from our fort while engaged in this work of digging in the advanced trenches, and two natives were wounded. In all, about a dozen of our men and half a dozen natives were forced to do this kind of service for the Boers. I can give you the names of Mr. Cowell and a Mr. Rosher who were amongst the number. Rosher was commandeered to take up arms against the British; but he held a post as field cornet under our Government, and he stoutly refused to fight against the English. He also refused to allow either of his two sons to bear arms on the Boer side, pleading with success that one of them, being not sixteen years of age, was exempt. For his disobedience Mr. Rosher was condemned to a month's hard labour, with the alternative of paying a fine of £5, and at the expiration of that time to be kept a civil prisoner. He would not pay the fine at first, so was put to work in the advance trenches under our fire. After a week at that occupation, he elected to pay the fine of £5 and be kept as a prisoner of war. I myself, from the day of my surrender, was handcuffed for two months and five days. In the paper they signed, the Boers promised that Major Clarke and myself should be treated with every respect becoming our rank; and when they handcuffed me I sent for the Commandant, and read him the conditions of our surrender, and asked him if he thought it was right that I should be handcuffed, or in accordance with the stipulations in the agreement. He replied that he did not know anything about it; such were his orders. Why they compelled Mr. Cowell to work in the trenches I don't know; they captured him while he was making his way to Potchefstrom. Mr. Nelson, J.P., was taken prisoner by the Boers in the house of Mr. Cawood, Wesleyan minister. No charge was brought against him, but he was kept in close confinement. His property outside the town was looted, and his cattle all driven away; he himself recognised his own brand on some of the oxen he saw slaughtered by the Boers. Three of Mr. Nelson's sons got into the fort and fought against the Boers. One of them, on his way there, was met by a party of armed Boers, who abused and insulted him, and threatened to take his life, but allowed him to pass. He then joined his brothers, and they did good service on our side. Two of them on a dark night carried despatches through the Boer lines from Colonel Winslow to His Excellency Sir Evelyn Wood at Newcastle, and arrived there after many perils (one of which was swimming the swollen Vaål River) and much fatigue.'

Turning now more particularly to the siege of the fort, amongst the townspeople who took shelter there were Chevalier and Mrs. Forssman and family. Dr. Sketchley and family, Mrs. M'Intyre and her children, Mrs. Palmer, and two ladies engaged as teachers in Potchefstrom; in all, there were about 300 souls cooped up in this twenty-five yards square of space. After the siege had been kept for some time, the ladies wished to go back to the town, and Colonel Winslow, on three separate occasions, made it a request to the Boer Commandant; but only Mrs. Palmer, Mrs. M'Intyre, and the two lady teachers were granted permission to return. Then all the ladies who remained in the town came and petitioned the Boer Commandant to allow the others, with their children, to come out; but Cronje was obdurate. He said they had sought the protection of the British, let the British protect them if they could. Commandant Raaf heard some of the Hollanders say, 'Let them die there.'

Mrs. Sketchley died in the fort not long after the refusal of the request, and also one of Chevalier Forssman's (Portuguese Consul) sons. Of Mrs. M'Intyre's children, one little girl was killed, and the other was wounded by a bullet. To add to the shocking tale, on the day the garrison surrendered, two of Chevalier Forssman's daughters were stricken with fever.

When the Boers took possession of the town, the walls of the fort were but four and a half feet in height, and the two 9-pounder guns were outside the fort. Shelter pits, as has been said, were quickly constructed for these. Every one worked might and main to make the place tenable, and a great deal of this work had to be done under fire. Water had to be fetched during the first few days of the fight from under fire; and then a reward of £25 was offered for those who should first find water by digging for it in the fort, so dangerous became the work of going 1000 yards to the willows to get any. The men worked for their lives and for the money to find the precious fluid, and at last one party struck it at a depth of twelve feet from the surface. It must be remembered that there was a drought during the first few days of the siege; afterwards two or three showers of rain fell, and the garrison, catching it in waterproof sheets and tarpaulins, drank it, filthy as it was, at the rate of three pints a man every two days. That was the allowance. I am now giving the words of one of the surviving officers of the brave band. The Kaffir wagon-leaders and drivers went out of their own free will; they thought the Boers would not do them any injury. They were taken prisoners by the enemy, and brought into the town. They were then forced to take up arms and fight against the English. Ten of these men tried to make their escape at night,—one white man and nine half-castes,—and they succeeded in getting about a mile away from the town along the road to Kimberley, to a point known as the 'first thorns.' Here they were overtaken by the Boers sent in pursuit of them, and every man was shot; their skeletons remain by the roadside to this day, unless the Boers have buried them very lately.

The fire of the Boers was kept up night and day. When the horses and cattle were driven out, our opponents shot the oxen, and then under fire volunteers had to go out and drag the carcases some distance away, so that the vultures dared to come and remove the carrion which putrefied the air. A few tents and some covering made out of sacks was the only shelter which the women had from the rain when it did fall. The low-lying position of the fort then caused the greatest discomfort. It could not be drained; and the men lay down on the wet ground, and woke on the wet ground in the morning. The gun pits had to be baled out. All sanitary arrangements had to be carried on outside the fort, where our people were constantly subject to the enemy's fire no less than inside, as may be seen by the list of casualties, including those of children. The bullets frequently came through the tents, and in at the loopholes by night as well as by day, as the attacking party, having got the range of the top of the parapet of our fort, fixed their rifles, and blazed away at night with great effect.

To invest the fort after the gaol had been abandoned, the Boers commenced to make trenches on those sides where already they had not cover in houses within sight of the fort. On the south side they made one, say 600 yards long. When it was brought to within 250 yards of the fort, it was time for us to do something, and then it was that Lieutenant Dalrymple Hay made his gallant sortie with ten men, drove the Boers out helter-skelter at the point of the bayonet, and brought back to the fort a number of sacks and spades,—of the latter our men experienced great scarcity,—besides two or three wounded Dutchmen. This was the first bayonet charge made during the war. The fire our men were met with was terrific, but only one of them fell; the others, led by Hay, jumped into the trench as the Boers fled, and, to the surprise of those of the enemy who remained, the gallant leader commenced bandaging those he found wounded there. His men, following his merciful example, did not bayonet those who were now at their mercy. One artillerymen who, on getting into the trench, was confronted by a Boer who was about to shoot him, knocked up the man's rifle, and gave him quarter. The Boers were greatly surprised and grateful for this humane treatment, which they repeatedly alluded to afterwards. Two of their number, however, died of their wounds. One incident of the charge is worthy of record. When two of our party fell wounded before reaching the sap,—Walsh and Colvin,—two artillerymen (drivers), named Praed and Gibson, obtained leave immediately to run out from the fort and fetch them in, and Trumpeter Martin also went to their assistance, and helped to bring the poor fellows in.

The Boers did not try sapping on that side after that day. They had, however, a 3-pound gun from which they fired leaden balls weighing between five and six pounds, and with this they made at times very good practice. In two days alone they fired 150 rounds from it, and its range was effective up to 1000 yards. One of its balls entered an embrasure of the fort and killed one of our men; at another time a ball killed two wounded men lying in the same tent. Our artillerymen did their best to keep the Boer artillerists at a distance; but the enemy were always shifting their cannon about from one place to another, and one never knew from which quarter it was going to open next. Our dead had to be buried at night outside the fort, and often the burying party were fired at. The army surgeon and two civil doctors did all they could to overcome the disease which began to play on our men after a short time.

On the eastern side of the fort the enemy set their prisoners and Kaffirs to work to run a sap out towards our magazine, which had been occupied by a party of soldiers under one of Mr. Nelson's sons. The magazine is a very small stone building, with an iron door and strong stone walls, and it was connected with our fort by a sap, which unfortunately was cut in a straight line instead of zigzag fashion. Parallel to this ran that of the Boers; their intention evidently was to head the magazine after getting abreast of it, and then, bringing that building in a line between themselves and their enemy, they would be safe from the fire of the 9-pounders, at any rate, until the magazine was demolished by shells fired by the British artillerymen. To make this sap the Boers had to go through the graveyard of the town, and in their progress they disturbed the remains of many bodies. When the enemy's sap was carried as far as the cemetery, about the middle of the month of January, Lieutenant Lonsdale, who was in command of our mounted infantry, charged home on the Boers at night, and drove them away from their work. This sortie evidently frightened more Boers than those in the trenches; for the whole force in the town was in a great state of excitement, every man rushing to arms. When the sap had been extended some way past the graveyard, and was level with the magazine, the direction was changed to head that building, and when this was done the Boers had trenches round three sides of our position, whilst the houses on the outskirts of the town gave them shelter from the fourth side. At the end of their sap which headed the magazine, now only sixty-five paces distant, the insurgents built a fort for the ship's gun they had become possessed of. In the centre of the earthwork they raised a high rampart, from the summit of which they could look over the top of the magazine and into our fort beyond. That necessitated more labour on our side in raising our parapet to screen the defenders and refugees inside from the eye of the Boer marksmen.

It is impossible not to admire the way in which the enemy went to work to obtain the capitulation of our garrison. Their sap, after the charge made on it by Lieutenant Lonsdale, was doubled, so that they had one trench covering the other; the second one, however, was constructed out of sight of our garrison, as the main sap-works sheltered it from view. Had there been another sortie made from our position, our men, arriving at the first sap, and finding it empty, would have received, no doubt, a telling fire from the second trench beyond before they were aware of its existence.

When I visited the scene of the conflict, barrels and sand-bags were lying all round; the barrels had been filled with earth, and rolled in front of the men working in the advance trenches. There were nearly fifty logs also, cut about two feet long, from the trunks of large trees. With an auger and chisel a hole had been cut in the centre of these logs. At the one end the hole was just large enough to admit the barrel of a rifle; but the aperture widened gradually to seven or eight inches in diameter. These logs were used as rifle rests; a Boer could lie behind one, his body perfectly sheltered, whilst he potted away at our fort. Having got his range satisfactorily, he would fix his rifle, and at night could pull trigger, and be sure of making good practice at our positions. For a long time our garrison could not understand how the enemy managed to send bullets just over the edge of our ramparts at night. The mystery was solved when these contrivances were seen lying about.

The enemy's contrivances and earthworks were indeed most admirable, though the means they employed for constructing them were very questionable. One hogshead was pointed out to me shattered by one of our shells; behind it one of our men doing his forced labour was killed instantly. The magazine was held to the last. Our trench from the fort leading to it is in places so shallow that a man passing along it had to go almost on hands and knees if he wished to get any cover by it. Along this Dr. Sketchley, who has seen considerable service around Plevna, had to make his way daily to visit his patients. The outside walls of the magazine have received an equal amount of attention from the Boer bullets with the gaol and court-house. Here four men were killed during the siege, and many were wounded by the rifle fire from the Boer earthwork. Into this earthwork the enemy did not actually bring their guns (they had a second ship's cannon close at hand), but the embrasures were made and everything was ready for mounting the guns at the time of the surrender of our garrison.

It was not long after the commencement of the siege that our rations fell short; a large quantity of tinned meat was spoiled, also mealies and other stores, which were piled up to form barricades at the commencement. The enemy's bullets pierced the meat tins, and their contents soon became useless, or something worse. The rain when it came destroyed the biscuits and corn. Enteric fever, dysentery, and scurvy were amongst the foes our men had to contend against, but they fought with a bull-dog pluck and courage. Though the Boers took possession of the gaol, it was never of much use to them, as almost immediately Major Thornhill planted a shell or two in the building, and drove them out helter-skelter. For the last month Kaffir corn and mealies formed the only food of the garrison, and, after being ninety-eight days under fire, when every one inside the fort looked more like a skeleton than a living being, Colonel Winslow began to treat with the enemy for terms of surrender.

With the outside world the garrison had had little or no communication. One night a European was found lying in the grass unarmed, close to the fort. He was brought in and questioned. He said he had run the risk of coming in to give information, because a relative of his in the town of Potchefstrom was in great want, and he had no money to supply the need. He brought in some Natal papers with accounts of the battles on the border, but the poor fellow was regarded with suspicion, and handcuffed to a wagon. There he lay for a couple of days, until it occurred to some of the officers of our garrison that the man might be honest; that there was positively nothing to spy out beyond what the Boers knew full well long ago. A sum of £5 was then offered by Colonel Winslow to this man to carry out despatches. That munificent reward was supplemented by a subscription raised amongst the garrison, and the man just before nightfall walked boldly out of the fort. Half a dozen shots were immediately fired at him by the enemy. He sprang up and fell, evidently a ruse to lead the Boers to believe they had killed him, for the despatch-carrier got through the enemy's lines and accomplished his task.

When negotiations for surrender were opened, the Boers at first would not consent to the gun ammunition being given to the Free State. The answer was, 'Then we will fire it into you and capitulate afterwards.' The Boers conceded the point, and on the 20th March (Sunday) the troops in the fort surrendered; the conditions being, that they should deliver up all guns and ammunition except that for the 9-pounder guns—about twenty-five rounds, which were to be handed over to President Brand. The brave little garrison had been reduced to the lowest extremities; they had done all that gallant men could do.

The Boers, armed, headed by the South African Republic flag, marched in front of the prisoners to the Free State border. All our officers had been wounded more or less severely, but they were treated kindly by the enemy. In fact, there was a little dinner given, at which victors and vanquished sat down, and compliments were the order of the day.

The list of casualties amongst this gallant British garrison was:—Officers—Killed: Captain Falls, RS.F. Wounded (all slightly): Colonel Winslow, R.S.F.; Lieutenant Russell, R.A.; Lieutenant Browne, R.S.F.; Second-Lieutenant Hay, R.S.F. Royal Artillery, No. 5—Killed: Sergeant Kelvington; Drivers Unsworth, Crannie, Bennett, Green, Walsh; Gunner Larkins. Ten of the Royal Artillery wounded; all doing well. 2d-21st R.S.F.—Killed: Sergeant Quagan; Corporal Gardsham; Privates Leechman, Bedfords, Jones, Dobbs, Roberts, Kemson, Thornback, Boyd, Laird, Jordan, Watson, Brownbill, Grant, Mullan, Noble, Birmingham. Thirty-one of the R.S.F. wounded. Besides these, there were six natives and one child wounded; one native and one child killed. Died of enteric fever, Mrs. Sketchley (daughter of Chevalier Forssman) and a son of Chevalier Forssman.

That the Boer commando around and in Potchefstrom behaved very badly there is plenty of evidence. How Cronje the Commandant disregarded the orders he received from Joubert, and delayed informing the garrison of the armistice, was a matter which the Transvaal State was nominally brought to book for. They had to give up the guns they took, and submit to the march of a few companies of our soldiers to Potchefstrom and back, after peace was signed, to make amends for this breach of faith.

The two 9-pounders had come in for a large share of rough handling. There was hardly a single spoke in one of the wheels of either guns or limbers, or any part of the weapons, which had not been struck by a bullet. They were literally peppered with shot. Why there should have been set up a society on the mutual admiration principle between British and Boers after the capitulation of our garrison, it is difficult to conceive. One of the malpractices of the enemy here was the use of explosive bullets, which formed on more than one occasion the subject of a remonstrance by Colonel Winslow.

The rifles captured were distributed amongst the Boers by their leaders, on the understanding that if they wished to retain them after the war they would have to pay £8 a-piece for them. Ten days before the surrender of the garrison, the Krijgsraad issued an order to the effect, that all inhabitants of the town were to take up arms against the British or leave the place. The inhabitants of Potchefstrom were virtually our greatest enemies. The loyal British who were in the minority were most unmercifully bullied by the army of investment. The murder of Dr. Woite, and the forcing of prisoners of war to work in the trenches, are the prominent incidents amongst many disgraceful things Cronje countenanced.

William Buchler states: 'I am a German by birth. I was condemned by the Boers to twelve months' hard labour for taking service against them under the English Government here on the 25th November last, as sergeant in Commandant Raaf's corps of special police. Taken prisoner on the 18th December, I was tried on 13th January. The way they put it was, "for misdeeds against the Transvaal Government." I with others had to go from six o'clock at night till six in the morning and work in the Boer trenches. On the 23d January the British garrison opened a heavy fire on us at night, and some men were hit. We refused to work any longer, and thereupon the Boer Commandant told us, if we would not continue our work we should get twenty-five lashes each, so we resumed the work, being under fire all the time. Whether the night was wet or dry there was no difference. When we appealed to General Cronje he confirmed the order of the Commandant. Only the other day, in the yard of the War Council, I saw Kaffirs being flogged with the "sjambok" becaused they refused to work in the trenches for the Boers.'

It is not to be wondered at that Mr. Buchler, after the peace was signed, knocked down with his fist two or three times a Boer who began boasting in his presence of killing so many Englishmen. While I was in Potchefstrom I saw several gentlemen thus laid summarily low by Englishmen as a result of tall-talk of Boer exploits. In the absence of any one to preserve order, there was every likelihood of some serious disturbances between the two races, or rather the three races—Boers and Hollanders *v.* Englishmen.

I could give the evidence of a dozen men who have assured me of the harsh treatment our prisoners were subjected to; but there are Englishmen who, having their all in the country, mean to stick to it as long as they can before they accept the positions of ruined men, and I am not at liberty in many cases to mention names publicly, because it is feared the Boers would take vengeance on them. A loyal Kaffir who was forced to work for the Boers, one who helped to bury in a garden fourteen of their number killed by a shell, made the significant remark when I was questioning him—'It is dangerous to tell the truth sometimes.'

One old inhabitant of Potchefstrom, whose word is beyond suspicion, assures me the Boers pressed into their service every Kaffir and coloured boy in the town. Those who refused to work in the trenches were flogged. One was flogged to such an extent that he died from it. Boys of fifteen and sixteen insulted with impunity men with grey hair—men who had lived twenty years and more in Potchefstrom, and men who had never taken any part in political matters; and if one quarter I have heard is true of the actions of Mr. Advocate Buskes, Mr. Steinhobel,—late 'counter-skipper' (who acted as commandant of police),—and other Jacks in office, then I would hope never to place foot in the Transvaal after the South African Republic takes it over. The more petty the man the greater the tyrant, appears to have been the order of the day in Potchefstrom; and I am glad to be able to believe that the conduct of the Boers there generally stands out in strong contrast to the conduct of their fellows at other places.

The house of the Rev. Mr. Jooste, a gentleman who made good his escape from the town, has been battered down by our shell fire. The house is at the corner of Potgieter Street, and from its cover and from that of a gentleman named Poortman, who acted as surgeon for the Boers, a very warm fire was kept up on our position during the siege.

Ten paces away from our fort are a dozen or more mounds of earth, under which lie the bodies of the brave men who were stricken down. Small bits of deal, nailed in the form of a cross, had been placed at the head of each, having a record, either scratched with ink or cut with a penknife, of the name and death of the occupant of the grave. Here also are buried Mrs. Sketchley and her child, stricken down by fever. Around the burying-place are strewed broken bottles, empty meat tins, and refuse of all kinds, and the carcase of a dead horse helps to make the atmosphere anything but pleasant there. The mounds over the graves have been and are daily trampled over by cattle grazing here, because the Boers have refused the relatives and friends of the deceased permission to erect a fence round the few square yards of veldt which contains the bodies of our people. 'It would spoil the appearance of the place,' was the answer given by men who are called the municipal councillors of Potchefstrom, to Dr. Sketchley and others who, as a deputation, waited upon these magnates to obtain the necessary permission.

Amongst others I have had the pleasure of meeting here, is one gentleman from Hartebeestfontein, about fifty miles distant W.S.W. At this place there is a settlement of Boers, many of them from the Cape Colony. One hundred and fifty of them determined to remain neutral when the war broke out, if they might be permitted; if not, to fight for the English. On the 23d December three Boers came to commandeer from them, and ordered them to send the articles required to Schoon Spruit. Having at this time no ammunition, they sent to Klerksdorp to buy some from a man named Leask, a Scotchman. He refused to sell them any, but said they could 'take it.' This they would not do. They were obliged then to leave their homes, as they could not defend them. They rode from Hartebeestfontein at night to Mashette's place, some forty miles west towards Scripdorf. Mashette is a powerful Kaffir chief, whom the refugees knew they could depend upon for protection, although the Boers thought he would side with them in their struggle against the English. Mashette gave them food and shelter willingly. About fifty armed Boers meanwhile were sent, under command of Franz Joubert and Limer, to commandeer at Hartebeestefontein, and they took a quantity of cattle away; but, finding the men gone, they sent a message to Mashette requesting him to send the fugitives away from his place. The chief refused, saying plainly, 'If the Boers wanted them they must come and take them,' and he warned Abraham Kotze not to come over the river if he wished to live. With these refugees at one time was the Rev. Mr. Jooste. He had incurred the enmity of the Boers, because they suspected him of spying. It was owing to the loyalty of these loyal Dutchmen that Jooste made his escape. They were 'suspected men' from the first, as they did not attend the great meeting, and many of them were threatened if they would not fight against the English. Now they knew what to expect as the penalty of their loyalty, and they say plainly, 'If the English throw us over now, we shall in the future be found amongst the defenders of the South African Republic; we must throw our lot in now with them.'

Speaking of threats and coercion, I notice in a Free State journal that a gentleman, acting as correspondent with the Boers, denies that any threats have been used to make some of the Boers join the force then at Laing's Nek, and he attributes the spread of the report to myself amongst others. If it is not true that any compulsion or coercion has been used, then all I can say is, that not one but at least twenty Boers who fought at the various engagements in Natal have deliberately and wilfully lied to me; but I really don't think they have. I don't see what incentive there is to make these men perjure themselves so grossly. Within thirty miles of Pretoria there is a young Englishman who is occupied now in a store, and he has told me, and it is a well-known fact, that the Boers forced him to take up arms against us, and that he was obliged to form one of the party which stormed the Majuba Hill.

The Wesleyan Mission Settlement, about thirty miles from Potchefstrom towards Fendersdorp, has suffered somewhat by the commandeering orders of the Boers; twenty oxen, thirty sheep, and twelve horses were taken, and twenty-five young men were ordered to go and assist on Boer farms to clean the gardens, cut the tobacco, etc. They were told they would be paid for this work, and threatened if they refused. Up to the present they have not received a single fraction for their labour. The name of this station is the School Plaats. The Kaffirs there are what are called civilised Kaffirs, part of the Bechuana tribe, who for the last thirty years have been under the chief of the Baralongs. You must not expect to hear of Christianity making very rapid strides among the Kaffirs of the Transvaal in future; the Boers seem to think that Christianity is suited to white men and white men alone. Education for Kaffirs is not a plank in their platform, though there are many Boers who have to resort to educated Kaffirs when they want a letter read or one written.

The Rev. Mr. Cawood, who has been in Potchefstrom during the siege, feels annoyed—and with some reason—that the Boers frequently accosted Englishmen in the streets with rude epithets, calling them 'the filth of the earth' sometimes; saying to others who ventured into stores to make purchases, 'After the men, the dogs,' and thrusting their way forward to get served first. Clothed Kaffirs had frequently pointed out to them their brethren with more scanty attire, and told, 'You will now have to be like those.'

Mr. Cawood himself was subject to very shabby treatment. At the time when the Boers arrived he received permission from the Boer General to continue his duties freely, and he did so until Mr. Commandant of Police came into office. One evening Mr. Cawood was seen by that gentleman in the streets 'after hours.' Next day the minister found a notice served on him to attend the Krijgsraad (or War Council) at an hour previous to the time at which he received the summons. For this default he was fined in his absence. Next day he went to explain matters, but was peremptorily refused a hearing. He appealed to Cronje, who had given him the permission, but Cronje was silent. The explanation that he had not received the notice to attend on the previous day was equally in vain. Steinhobel, Commandant of Police, swore that he served the notice personally. Mr. Cawood was ready to depose on oath that that was untrue. At last, urged to speak his mind, the rev. gentleman did fearlessly make some allusions to the want of justice of the Court, which were unpalatable to the Bench, who fined him still further for his contempt of Court. Refusing to pay the fines, which were now accumulating fast, he was imprisoned in default; but a parishioner, after the rev. gentleman had been incarcerated for a few days, came forward and paid the money. An excellent man—one who has gained great esteem in Potchefstrom and its neighbourhood—will be lost to the town by the departure of Mr. Cawood. The Boers found him a very 'hard nut to crack,' and will be no doubt glad when he does leave the place.

To give an idea of the property stolen from private houses in Potchefstrom and neighbourhood, would fill a volume. I do not refer to property commandeered, oxen, sheep, horses, mealies, corn, etc., taken from farmhouses (though it is questionable whether ostriches were really necessary for the Boer army, they took the best of the flock belonging to Mr. Nelson), but furniture, pianos, carpets, everything moveable, in fact. Boer ladies went into the shop of Mr. Scorgie, and helped themselves to the finest silks and ornaments of every description, discarding those sombre or brilliant fabrics which now to-day and then to-morrow the Boer ladies alternately drape themselves in. Dr. Sketchley's house was denuded of everything except a stove, a table, and a bedstead. These two cases are only given as incidents out of scores that might be cited. The Royal Commission will have a busy time of it if it comes to Potchefstrom. About eighty families of English people were in the town at the time the order was given for all to join the Boers or else quit the place. It is supposed the Boers expected there would be heavy fighting, and they wanted the town clear, or else they wanted it clear so that there would be more loot at their disposal, and of course nearly all these families did leave. Commandants' wives were not above helping themselves to furniture. The wife of one of the leaders was accosted by the owner of some property on which the lady was sitting on a wagon. When the gentleman asked what the lady was doing with his goods,—this was after peace was made,—she replied that she was only going to take care of it for him; but he declined her services without thanks, and took charge of the chattels himself. Much of the disorder amongst the Boers in the town may no doubt be attributed to 'liquor' influencing them. Each man regularly received a 'soupie' before going on night post duty and another on his return, and that was the allowance by order; but alcoholic drink was easy of access to them at all times, and they profited by the opportunity to a great extent.

The Cape Commercial Bank, which faces the Market Square, was amongst the buildings broken into by the enemy, but the door of the strong room defied all their efforts; they only contrived to strain it to an extent which made it a matter of great difficulty for the manager to open it with the key.

Here, as in Pretoria, it is the uncertainty of the future which is now most trying. The natural products of the country are cheaper than they have ever been known before; imported goods are scarce, and up to famine prices. Whether to trek elsewhere, abandoning what little is left them, or to remain in the country, are the two problems which puzzle men. Already the town is half deserted; the traders left are doing no business, nor are they likely to do more than sell off stocks on hand. The whole place is in mourning, because ruin stares every Englishman in the face who had his home and property here. They hope nothing and expect nothing from the Royal Commission, because they doubt the ability of the Boers, or their willingness, to pay any sum that may be agreed on by the Commission. The Hollanders who side with the Boers believe that the Republic will be able to repay to England the 'small sums' borrowed or paid before the annexation, 'because the Boers will have to receive a large sum from England on account of the taxes England has collected during her reign in the Transvaal.' They seem to forget that this money and more has been spent in administering the government.

From the diary of a resident I am permitted to extract the following notes relative to the siege of Potchefstrom, or rather the siege of the fort and the occupation of the town by its future rulers:—

'At one P.M. on the 15th December, I saw twelve mounted Boers, two of whom were armed, enter the town. I went to the Willow Bridge (the entrance to the town from Pretoria), and saw a large body of mounted Boers approaching along the Heidelberg road. They extended in a semicircle, and halted about a half-mile from the bridge; eight of them advanced, and dismounted on the town side of the river, and took possession of the bridge. Afterwards the main body advanced to the bridge, and then proceeded at a hard gallop into the town. I carefully counted their number, it was 570, exclusive of a few black servants who had no arms. I recognised several of the Boers as residents in the neighbourhood of Potchefstrom, and some of them shouted to me to go and fetch my gun and come and join them. The first party of twelve rode to the centre of the town, after first calling at the house of Mr. Pretorius. The main body halted opposite his house, and, extending to the right, formed a semicircle on that side of the town. After remaining there for some time, they dismounted and stood by their horses for an hour. Then a portion of them went on to the centre of the town; the others off-saddled their horses, and turned them loose to graze. At three P.M. I went into the centre of the town and passed through the Boers. I was told by them, in answer to my inquiries as to what was the object of their visit, that they were going to proclaim and establish their own government, of which Potchefstrom was to be the seat. No incivility was offered to me, but some whom I knew personally avoided me. Going up Church Street, I noticed a large number of armed Boers at Borrious' printing office next to the Royal Hotel. Crossing the Market Square to the Criterion, I noticed that armed mounted Boers were patrolling the streets as far as the Market Square, and that at each corner of the streets a squad of armed men mounted was stationed. I saw several inhabitants of the town obstructed while attempting to pass to and fro, but saw no violence used by the Boers. The inhabitants, as you may suppose, were considerably excited by these movements. On the morning of the 16th December, rising early, I found a crowd still round the printing office, and mounted men patrolling the streets. At breakfast-time the mail coach for Kimberley arrived at the Royal Hotel. Dr. Jolivet, Mr. Knoep, Mr. Beauvais, and a young Frenchman got into the coach, and it was about to start, when a mounted man galloped down the street from the direction of the fort, and said that a shot had been fired from the fort, and one of the Boers was wounded. Several armed Boers then surrounded the coach, roughly ordered the passengers to alight, and the coachman to take out the horses. They obeyed; the passengers were considerably hustled meanwhile. Mr. Faure, the coach agent, protested against the stoppage of the coach, but was struck violently in the mouth by one of the armed men. Mr. Young, proprietor of the Royal Hotel, who was assisting the Bishop and other passengers to alight, was also struck on the back of the neck by a Boer using the butt end of his rifle. Cries of "Shoot him" and violent language were used by the Boers, and repeatedly rifles were presented at the persons of unarmed men who were standing by watching the affair. For half an hour afterwards matters seemed quieter, but about ten o'clock I heard a rapid discharge of firearms in the neighbourhood of the military camp, and then reports of firearms from the Market Square. I was at this time standing with others on the verandah of the Royal Hotel; and Jacobus Scheepers, coming from the printing office, told us he was a commandant in the Boer army, and ordered us to "go away from there," adding that five minutes would be allowed us. We asked where we were to go to, and he replied, "All that are for H.M. Government had better go to the camp, and those that are for us had better come to the printing office." We pointed out that to go to the camp we should have to pass through the heavy fire then going on. His answer was that that was our look-out. The Boers would provide no escort for us. We said we were unarmed and non-combatants. He replied, "We recognise no neutrals." Our party then dispersed, taking shelter in different houses and stores in Church Street. Mr. Young declared he would remain by his property, and some of the coach passengers and myself remained in the hotel. All the servants, white and black, male and female, deserted the hotel, except one boy, who said it was no use being afraid; he would stick to the "boss." The firing still continued, and some of the townspeople who were in the street, unable to gain their dwelling, were subject to violence from the Boers. On the evening previous to the outbreak of hostilities, some of the inhabitants were subject to outrage by the Boers. Mr. Smart, manager of the Standard Bank, whilst returning home from visiting Captain Falls at the Landdrost's office, was seized by a party of sixty or seventy Boers, his revolver taken away, and he was led to a by-street, where he had to stay the whole night long in the rain, with no better cover than that found under a hedge. When he attempted to rise he was forced down, and it was not before morning that the Boers released him. The Boers seized all the horses and cattle they could lay hands on. The horses were in part returned to the inhabitants, but the animals had nearly been ridden to death. On the morning of the 17th firing was kept up, bullets falling in town freely; and though we heard the boom of guns from the fortress, and shells dropped in our neighbourhood, the firing was principally between our men in the court-house and the Boers posted at the north and south corners of the Market Square. This day the Boers came into Mr. Young's place and began removing the forage. When he remonstrated with them, they advised him to go into his house if he valued his life. The Boer officers also on this day commenced ordering liquor and other refreshments for their own individual use, but paid nothing for this. They also comandeered things, and this practice was continued during the whole time I stayed at the hotel, eight or nine days. The Boers this day were reinforced by 300 men arriving from the north-western part of the district; and, sheltered by the trees and houses, a constant fire was kept up on the Landdrost's office, the return fire of our men doing but little damage. We now experienced great difficulty in obtaining food, as we were dependent on the Royal Hotel, the Boers encroaching on the already limited stock by demanding meals for themselves. They came in six and eight at a time. A proclamation signed by a triad of Boers was this day staringly circulated, stating that the Boers had established the Republican Government. The Boers evidently were greatly enraged at the defence made by the party in the court-house, and they boasted freely of their intention to storm the place. This they never accomplished, but with the help of the occupants of the house adjacent to the court-house they stealthily crept to the side of the building, and endeavoured in the evening to fire the thatched roof, but without success. Firing continued the whole of the night until the morning of the 18th, and then a party of young Boers under D. Van Graan, after strenuous efforts, succeeded in throwing a ball of lighted paraffin or petroleum on the thatched roof; and the garrison at the court-house were obliged to surrender. No assistance could be given them from the fort or gaol because of the intervening cover, which the Boers took advantage of. The prisoners were marched to the residence and store of Chevalier Forssman, opposite the Royal Hotel. These premises (Forssman's) had been broken open, although under cover of the Portuguese Consular flag, which was hauled down by the Boers and trailed in the mud. The sole reason for this outrage, so far as I know, was that Mr. Forssman had taken refuge in the camp. Major Clarke was confined in the Royal Hotel; his guard of six men installed themselves in the drawing-room, where they behaved themselves like true Boers, expectorating about the carpet, etc. The calls on the proprietor of the hotel to provision so many men now became a very arduous duty, and he at last obtained permission to draw a ration of beef from the Boer Commissariat. At this time the number of prisoners was augmented by the seizure of many of the inhabitants of the town, under various pretexts. Ladies and children, included in the number, were imprisoned in the rooms at the back of the hotel. The success in obtaining the capitulation of the garrison at the court-house seemed to make the Boers more overbearing and insolent in their conduct than ever. They had issued a proclamation that "the persons and property of the inhabitants would be protected," but on this day they looted the Criterion Hotel, Schirkerling's, Pitt's, Scorgie's, and other stores; at the same time commandeering went on freely, and private houses were broken into and the furniture stolen. Getting quarrelsome and boisterous under the influence of the liquor they stole, the Boers now defied their leaders. There appeared to be an end to the vaunted semblance of discipline. They entered private houses, forcing their way in with rifles cocked, threatening to shoot any one who remonstrated with them; in fact, no man's life was safe. On Sunday the 19th December, the Boer leaders, seeing that they were losing all control over their men, wisely prohibited the sale or gift of liquor by any inhabitant to any of the Boers, and this order proved the salvation of the townspeople. On Thursday it was reported that a contingent of Free State Boers, 600 strong, had arrived, also 600 men from Heidelberg. According to their own account, they had now

2070 men investing the place, and this force was certainly increased by small parties who kept arriving from day to day. We heard, however, that a portion of the Free State men, disgusted with the cool reception accorded them, or afraid of the action of their own Government, returned to the Free State on the 20th December, leaving part of their number here, who are well known as residents in the Cronstad and Winburg districts. Inhabitants of the town who dared to venture into the streets from their houses, because they were getting short of food, were arrested and brought to headquarters and questioned, "Why have you hitherto secluded yourselves?" After some trouble, the Boers issued a limited number of passes for persons to go from house to house, within a small area, under very stringent conditions. On the 21st December, the garrison of the prison, falling short of provisions, evacuated it, retiring on the fort without loss. On the 22d, the Boers occupied the deserted stronghold, but were quickly driven out by the shell fire from the fort. By order of the Boer General, a public meeting was called. It was attended by Boer sympathizers. D. Pretorius was thereat elected field cornet, with Frans Joubert as assistant, and it was announced that the Krijgsraad had nominated Piet Bezhuidenot (the man whose wagon was seized) as District Commandant. Authority was given to the field cornet to open stores and seize goods, subject to the confirmation of the Krijgsraad. Mr. Goetz, Landdrost, was taken prisoner, and placed under strict surveillance; the horses turned out from the fort were seized by the Boers. December 23.—Boers engaged in making trenches near Dr. Poortman's house. Paul Kruger arrived, and issued a second proclamation, throwing the blame on Sir Owen Lanyon for the rising. December 25.—This the day of "peace on earth, and goodwill towards men," Carolus was shot as a spy. December 26.—The insanitary state of the town is a cause of alarm. December 27.—Some ladies who had taken shelter in camp allowed to return to town. December 29.—Mr. Van der Linden, by order of the Boer inquisitors, was shot as a spy. January 1.—An attempt made by the Boers to use an old cannon to batter the fort, but our garrison greeted its discharge with ironical cheers and laughter. On this and the following day the Boers held religious meetings, and had some psalm-singing in the Wesleyan chapel. January 3. —The pass system remodelled; people's passes cancelled, and the inhabitant who wanted to go 100 yards had to attend first at the

Krijgsraad and to wait patiently until a pass was granted him. "Grietje," as they called their cannon, was again tried, but with ill effect. On January 5 the Krijgsraad made a demand on the merchants of the town for a supply of goods to the value of about £10,000. The stocks in town having already been exhausted, the merchants had to consent to forward the order to their agents in Natal for execution. January 6.—This day was marked by a tragedy, the trial, condemnation, and execution of Christian Woite, a native of Spriensburg, Prussia. After living some years in the Cape Colony, he settled in the Transvaal six years ago, where he acquired a well-earned reputation for the successful treatment of diseases, though he was not a regularly qualified medical practitioner. The proceedings of the Krijgsraad were kept profoundly secret, but it is well known that the accusation against him was that of having supplied information to the English Government of the proceedings of the Boers at their meeting. His son Wilhelm, a lad of nineteen, was at the same time charged with a like offence. He was acquitted; his father was found guilty, and condemned to death. Immediately this became known, his fellow-countrymen in the town got up a memorial praying for commutation of the sentence, but the Krijgsraad refused to entertain the memorial. Mr. Woite, who was forty-two years of age, had a wife and nine children, the eldest his son who was tried and acquitted. Mrs. Woite and her children were allowed a short interview with the condemned man, and then at two o'clock he was conveyed, handcuffed, under a strong guard, to the rear of the Royal Hotel. The Rev. B. Köhler, of the Berlin mission station, one of his countrymen and next-door neighbour, offered up a short impressive prayer at the open grave. A firing party of eight men received the signal, and Woite, with one convulsive bound, fell dead. Three bullets had pierced his breast, and one had struck his forehead. On the walls of the cell in which he was confined previous to his trial and his execution were found written the following words in his native language: "I trust in Jesus. I have given myself into His hands. I am glad to die; in Christ I shall live. In a little while I shall be no more seen; I go to the Father.—C. O. Woite." This execution was witnessed by Mr. Young. January 8.—The Misses Malan and Watt were allowed to come out of the fort, and committed for safe custody to the care of the Rev. Mr. Maury (Dopper) and Mr. W. Cameron. January 9 (Sunday).—Quiet, as the Sunday generally is. January

10.—Pass system again changed. Frans Steinhobel, formerly clerk to J. W. Lake & Co., appointed field cornet, with power to grant passes at 6d. each. The Boers' Grietje has been sent under a strong escort to Rustenburg. Persons in ignorance of new pass regulations fined 5s. for their fault. The two ladies who were permitted to leave the fort, and who were previous to the war engaged as teachers at the Government school, were examined by the Krijgsraad and sent away from the town. January 11.—Another source of revenue! Persons entering the Krijgsraad or other offices without doffing their hats to be fined; in one case 1s., and in another £37, 10s. was the penalty. January 12.—The garrison at the fort have made a trench to the magazine. January 13.—"State prisoners" examined before Krijgrsaad. Mr. A. M. Goetz, Landdrost, and M. Rich, his clerk, admitted to bail on sureties for £5000 and £3000 respectively. Some of Raaf's volunteers sentenced to various terms of hard labour, ranging from three to twelve months. January 14.—Grietje returned from Rustenburg. One Boer reported killed while working the gun there. January 16.—The mail arrived from Free State, confirming news of reinforcements on the way. January 18.—A good deal of artillery and rifle practice. January 21.—Boers, seventy-five in number, to go to Heidelberg. Great indignation in town because prisoners of war have been ordered to go and work in Boer trenches at night, exposed to the fire from our fort. January 22.—Boers greatly excited on hearing rapid discharge of cannon at fort, and musketry fire. The reserves had to be forced by threats from their commanders to go to the support of their comrades. A Boer exchanged as a prisoner of war says he saw fifteen killed and wounded on his own side. January 23.—Hot firing early this morning. We thought it was in the streets. Two Boers seriously wounded. A number of wounded prisoners from Bronkhurst Spruit brought in. Buskes, secretary to the Krijgsraad, refused a townsman permission to supply them with refreshment. Through the humanity of Mr. Scheepers, later on, we were permitted to give the poor fellows some wine and fruit. January 24.—Our prisoners, who arrived yesterday, forwarded to the Vaal River. January 25.—Two hundred men reinforce the Boers in the trenches. Our volunteers, forced in the trenches to form breastworks for the Boers in view of the fort, having not been fired on, evidently the Commander at our fort understands their unfortunate position. January 26.—Hendrik Theron, formerly resident in this town, arrived, and publicly reported that British troops were landed and proceeding to frontier. He was arrested and imprisoned by order of the Krijgsraad. January 27.—A Boer who had entered the premises of Standard Bank, and insulted the ladies there, was fined £3, 10s. or eight days' hard labour. Young Combrink, son-in-law of Mr. Botha, shot through the head while in the trenches. Much indignation felt because most of the townspeople have been warned they will be required for personal service on Monday next, or have to pay fines from £10 upwards. M. D. O. Erasmus (contractor for Government supplies to the English), Kleuver, and Triter appointed commissioners to assess the inhabitants for money towards cost of the war. January 31.—Out of 200 persons summoned before Commandant Wolmarhans, seventeen stepped to the front and declared themselves British subjects, unwilling to serve in the ranks of the enemy. They were fined, and ordered to keep within their houses quietly. The others, who declared for the Republic, I do not know what was done with them. February 1.—W. Cowell brought before Krijgsraad, charged with being a spy, but not convicted. February 3.—Lagrange, a man from Wonderfontein, shot through the head. February 4.—Flag of truce sent by Boers to fort with letters supposed to have been intercepted between here and Pretoria. Tenor of letter said to be instruction to Commandant of fort to surrender if provisions failed, but to take care to spike the guns. The Boers sent up accompanying message to say if the guns were spiked the lives of the garrison would not be guaranteed in case of surrender. Colonel Winslow replied that there was plenty of work left for the guns. He had, moreover, no intention of surrendering. February 5.—Dr. Mahler, Boer medical officer, wounded. Memorial sent to Krijgsraad asking that Mr. W. A. Smith, who has been seven weeks a prisoner, be either brought to trial or released on bail, securities being offered to any amount. He was liberated on bail. The charge against him was that his name was found mentioned in Woite's notes as present at one of the Boer meetings. February 9.—Restrictions as to passes increased. Not a shot fired to-day. February 10.—A Kaffir suspected of carrying letters to the fort received twenty-five lashes. February 11.—A number of English residents had to appear at Krijgsraad for the Kaffir previously flogged to look at and say who had engaged him, but he failed to do so. Authentic account of battle of Laing's Nek received here in the *Natal Mercury* of February 1. February

13.—Field cornet in charge of the bridge took French leave, having been refused leave of absence to visit his sick child. February 15.—Not a shot was fired yesterday, but to-day the Boers, having pressed all the natives in the town to work at an embrasure in which they intended putting their cannon, rolled bales of wool up to protect the working party. The guns at the fort made short work of the wool; two natives killed, one wounded. February 16.—Another native killed, and one wounded, in the trenches. Our men at the fort captured twelve head of cattle belonging to the Boers. February 17.—Two more natives wounded while doing forced work in the Boer trenches. February 18.—Sortie from fort this evening; seized five sheep and helped themselves to green mealies. February 19.—Sortie by garrison to the gaol. They took one Boer prisoner, and carried back to fort some of the iron from the roof. A Kaffir killed in the trenches. February 21.—A good deal of vexation caused to the Boers by a stake planted between the fort and the prison, on which was placed a female scarecrow holding an umbrella taken from the Boer captured by our men on the previous day. February 23.—Two natives wounded in the trenches. February 24.—Frederick Findlay, a married man, who has two children, was killed while at work in the trenches. He was one of the volunteers who was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment by the Krijgsraad. February 28.—Boers have commenced what they call a new fort, north-west of the camp, where they intend placing their cannon. March 2.—Heavy firing, two natives and one Boer wounded. March 4.—Moquette, late messenger of the court, sentenced to three months' hard labour for saying that the death of Findlay was a deliberate murder. Permission refused to Mr. and Mrs. Forssman to come out of the fort. Cronje next day told a deputation of ladies, who waited on him, requesting permission for Mr. and Mrs. Forssman to come out of the fort, that ladies were at the bottom of all mischief, and he refused their request. March 7.—Two Boers wounded. A German named Muller mortally wounded. Rumours that an armistice is contemplated. March 9.—Notice issued that all loyals will be allowed to leave the town, and no protection offered to any one after the 11th instant. March 11.—The wall of Boer fort knocked down, burying old Grietje, by our fire. March 13.—Cronje refuses to allow Mollet and Sluymers, who arrived from Free State with a letter from President Brand, to deliver their letter to Colonel Winslow. Free State messengers urge their errand without effect. March 14.—Confirmation of news of armistice received. March 16.—*Staats Courant* publishes agreement for armistice, but no news given to the fort here of it. March 20.—Terms of capitulation being discussed between Commandant of the fort and Boer General. March 21.—Terms of capitulation agreed to. Our men leave with honours of war, officers retaining side arms. March 23.—British evacuated fort. 103 out of 220 souls have been killed or died. The Boers wanted to exclude Mr. and Mrs. Forssman from the treaty, but Colonel Winslow indignantly refused, and threatened to break off the negotiations. This brought the Boers to their senses. These leaders were very anxious to get possession of the fort, as many of the Boers had become dispirited, and many had left for their homes. Our men in the fort had only five days' rations of mealies left. March 25.—We learn at last the terms of the disgraceful peace concluded by the Liberal Ministry in England with the Boer leaders. We are, one and all, ashamed of our nationality, yet the Boers are dissatisfied.'

After a miserable journey back to Pretoria, with no other company than a half-lunatic Kaffir boy as servant, I started for Heidelberg, as the Volksraad was already meeting there. Here, however, I will give some details of the sieges of the northern posts in the Transvaal, beginning with the siege of Leydenburg.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SIEGE OF LEYDENBURG.

FIFTY men of the 94th, under Lieutenant Long, and nine volunteers, fine hardy fellows from the Gold Fields,—one named Stewart, a native of Natal, Holmes, MacDougall, E. Kirby, J. Dyer, T. Williams, J. O'Brien, Sharrocks, and others,—formed the garrison at the Leydenburg fort at the outbreak of hostilities. The town itself it was impossible to hold, so the Boers had undisputed possession of it from the first.

It has been the subject of great complaint among the loyal Englishmen in that district, that many of the storekeepers in Leydenburg, unsolicited, offered goods and money to the Boers as soon as they entered the town. One Englishman voluntarily put his signature to a subscription list on behalf of the Boer cause, but afterwards, when upbraided by a loyal man, wanted to erase his name.

On the 6th January the Boers entered the town in a force of about 250, took possession of the public offices and the gaol, and, after reading several proclamations, one announcing the re-establishment of the South African Republic, they released all the prisoners. Some of them went and cut off the water supply from the town, and then the first shots were fired from the camp, wounding two Boers.

Mrs. Long was the only lady in the fort, but she proved most useful in attending on the sick and wounded. Just before the fighting began, a man named Green, of Spitzkop, brought into the town his wife and children, and when on the point of leaving, he was beckoned to by Father Walsh, who was in the fort, and returned to speak with him. After some little time spent in conversation, he went homewards, having to pass the Boer laager.

The Boers called him to their laager, and he fearlessly went up to them, suspecting no treachery. As soon as he got inside and dismounted, a Boer named Beetjes, of the Waterfall district, blew his brains out, placing the muzzle of his gun close to the head of the unfortunate man. No reason whatever was assigned, or has been assigned, for this dastardly act, and no inquiry ever demanded by the British Government.

The death of Green was a murder in cold blood, by order of one Marais, field cornet. Green had received from Abel Erasmus—the gentleman to whose neck Sir Garnet Wolseley made feeling allusion not long ago—a pass to take his wife and child into Natal from the Gold Fields. When Green arrived at Leydenburg, he found that the pass was valueless to conduct him through the Boer lines, and he determined to return to the Gold Fields; he was unarmed, and never, either by word or gesture, gave the Boers any offence.

Before the fight at Leydenburg commenced, Erasmus had an Englishman who was indulging in loud talk pulled up to a wagon wheel, and twelve lashes given to him. Erasmus's authority was sufficient to ensure that punishment, though his signature was valueless on a pass. Kaffirs who refused to obey this magistrate's commands were also lashed, some receiving twenty-five and some fifty strokes with the 'sjambok,' or rhinoceros-hide whip.

It was on the 23rd December that news arrived at Fort Mary from Middleburg, that the mail from Middleburg to Pretoria had been stopped by Boers, and the official letters destroyed. The same day news came that the Boers were advancing on the town; the preparations of the garrison were therefore of the most hurried description. The Boers investing the place numbered at various times from 500 to 600; 200 or 300 were later on in the siege despatched to the Nek. But even taking into consideration this withdrawal of the besieging force, there were sufficient Dutchmen investing the fort to make its successful defence an arduous as well as a perilous task. Firing on both sides was continuous.

For a long while the garrison had only one pint of water per diem per man, for all purposes; afterwards, when they deepened their well forty-five feet, they obtained a plentiful supply. On the morning of the 6th January, the Boer Commander, one P. J. Steyn, who is spoken of as having been most just and fair, requested Lieutenant Long to consider certain proposals for surrender, which

Lieutenant Long promptly refused to do. In a quarter of an hour's time an attack was made on the fort from all sides, but was repulsed after severe fighting. Here also the Boers had a gun, which they kept constantly at work; and to keep up the supply of ammunition, they forced an Englishman, named Barclay (whom they had captured in the town), to make up cartridges. This occupation he had to submit to, as there was always a guard with loaded rifles set over him.

On the 13th of March the Boers fired the roof of the Commissariat store, and they also managed to ignite the thatch roofs of the block-houses comprising the fort, but our men worked bravely and subdued the fire. The roofs were then pulled off. All this had to be done by the garrison, exposed to the fire of the Boers, and Mr. Stewart was killed whilst working might and main at this task. Warrant-Officer Parsons, of the Commissariat, distinguished himself on two separate occasions, by going out of the fort and throwing hand-grenades into the enemy's positions, which created great diversion. Two others, Holmes and MacDougall, are likely to have some mark of recognition conferred on them for the gallantry they displayed in bringing wounded men from under fire after a sortie made by our garrison.

One position held by our force was the magazine. In this were left three barrels of gunpowder, connected by electric wire with the fort, in case the Boers should take possession of it. One night two or three Boers, with a few Germans, crept up to the magazine, cut the wire, and were about to remove the powder, when the alarm was given. Our men in the fort kept up such a hot fire on the open doorway while the enemy was inside, that for a long time they dared not come out. Hand-grenades also were thrown in to ignite the powder, but without avail. At last the Boers rushed out, and, strange to say, escaped, only one of their number being hit.

On the scene appeared Mr. Aylward about the 9th of March. He must have ridden post haste from Laing's Nek, shortly after the Majuba affair; and the circumstance of his visit to Leydenburg reminds me of a remark he let fall during the interview I had with him and Joubert and staff inside the Boer lines the day after that engagement. Aylward said to Joubert, 'You know, General, you wanted me to go up north'; and then added, evidently remembering there were strangers present, 'to attend to the wounded.' Joubert replied, 'Yes.' Taking this in connection with the fact that after the Majuba affair the Boers, hourly expecting another attack, sent for reinforcements to many of their laagers in the Transvaal, and that it was after Aylward's arrival at Leydenburg that a detachment of Boers was told off to proceed to the border, there can be little doubt that Aylward was the messenger who brought the order of Joubert to the Boer Commandant at Leydenburg to despatch reinforcements to headquarters at Laing's Nek.

Mr. Aylward endeavoured to persuade the British garrison 'to submit, and warned them they would be treated as murderers if they did not,' says one account. That Mr. Aylward used his influence to induce our garrison to submit to the Boers, I have on the highest authority. Failing in the capacity of peacemaker, he directed the military operations as soon as his proposals were rejected by Lieutenant Long. Knowing two Frenchmen at the Gold Fields skilled as engineers, he sent a party of Boers to fetch them, and offer them £200 for their services in helping to take our fort. The Frenchmen, however, made their escape when they heard that they were required. After this Aylward himself directed the operations of cutting down the gum trees at Kruger's Post, and fashioning their trunks so as to form shelter for the Boers to approach our fort. How far they succeeded in their intention may be imagined from the fact that they actually had advanced their sap to within sixty yards of Fort Mary (so called after the Christian name of Mrs. Long) at the time when the news arrived of the armistice.

The Boers in Leydenburg district, like every other district, were extremely anxious to place in safe custody any of our native Commissioners who had influence over the Kaffirs, for they dreaded a rising of the black men against them. With the idea of securing the person of Mr. A. Ritter, who was entrenched at Fort Albert with a Mr. Scholefield and twelve native policemen, the Boer Commandant at Leydenburg sent a force of fifty men to arrest that functionary. Mr. Ritter refused to be taken, and the party went away without accomplishing their purpose. A week later, a Boer, who represented himself as 'manager of the natives' on the Dutch side, came and parleyed with Mr. Ritter, and it was mutually agreed between them that neither on the one side nor the other should the natives be called out as auxiliaries. Ritter asserts that Viljoen, on the side of the Boers, immediately broke his part of the agreement, and that he felt himself freed from any obligation in consequence. The result was that on 29th March a party of Boers approached the fort held by Mr. Ritter. To use his own words:—

'I knew already the evening before that they would arrive, and I had placed before daybreak five police in ambush on the wagon road. I ordered twenty policemen out to engage the Boers on the hillside, while the Boers received fire from the fort also: they lost a horse, which fell into our hands wounded. They made for the wagon road, and were received by the fire of the police in ambush there; they galloped at right angles to the left towards the steepest footpath of the mountain, where the twenty police above mentioned had arrived by this time, and who, under excellent cover, fired on the Boers during their descent down to the Steelpoort. There were no losses on our side; the Boers (I am informed by Inyabela) sent for a wagon to remove their killed and wounded. On the day following I received the report from the chief Inyabela that 500 of his men were ready to be led by me and Mr. Scholefield as a native contingent to Leydenburg, to give to the garrison of Fort Mary an opportunity to get a permanent water supply. This I did in consequence of receipt of a letter (accompanied by a verbal message) from the officer commanding troops, Leydenburg, to the General commanding, which the bearer, Windvogel, was to deliver to the nearest English post in case of not succeeding to get through the swollen rivers. I learned from Windvogel that at the end of the rainy season the water supply at Fort Mary would be insufficient. On the 1st April I received a letter from Mr. Long that hostilities were to cease at once.'

The above incident, though small at first sight, is an important one. Had once any Kaffirs in the Transvaal been led by Englishmen to attack the Boers, there would have been a general rising of the natives throughout the country, and of the inhabitants of Zululand as well. How ill it would have fared with the Dutch had the match once been applied,—and it was on the eve of lighting when peace was signed,—those who know how the Kaffir wages war against an enemy can best form an opinion.

When peace was proclaimed, the soldiers at Fort Mary were furious. They tore down the Republican flag over the court-house in the town, pulled down the mast, and became very excited. Lieutenant Long ordered a new mast to be made, and a flag placed on it; as he had not received any orders to pull down the Republican flag, and as he had not taken the town, he refused to sanction such an act by his men. In consequence of their insubordination, he had to threaten to shoot any man who dared to interfere with the flag.

Aylward was looked for in vain by the soldiers; he decamped as soon as the news of the peace was received, and went to Heidelberg, and thence to Cape Colony, carefully avoiding any place garrisoned by us.

After peace was signed, in more than one instance the Boers went to houses in the country, armed with commandeer notes, and by threats obtained a contribution for the South African Republic. Immediately the money was paid, they told the victims, 'Peace has been made,' and laughed at the discomfiture of those who found they had been robbed or swindled. At Leydenburg many matters required examination—for instance, the act of the Landdrost in supplying a Boer named Pieter de Villiers with 600 rounds of ammunition prior to the time of the attack. An inquiry how one firm came by £800 worth of guns and ammunition, the whole of which fell into the enemy's hands, might also have been instructive.

The English inhabitants of Leydenburg cannot, on the whole, be accused of *trop de zèle* for the British. In the way of a gratuitous contribution, many of the principal storekeepers and merchants, desirous of conciliating the Boers, subscribed money for them, before even they were asked to do so. There was, indeed, a good deal of fawning and cringing, a good deal of siding with 'the party in power,' altogether unworthy of Englishmen, almost despicable in a renowned turncoat. On the Boer side there fought more than one man of British descent.

Three men on our side were killed in action at Leydenburg, one died of fever, eight were seriously wounded. Colonel Bellairs, in a General Order, thanked Lieutenant Long and the garrison for its gallant defence, and mentioned also Mrs. Long's noble services in a grateful manner. The mutiny of the men composing the garrison after the proclamation of peace was the only incident unworthy of the British soldier recorded in that quarter.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MARABASTADT AND RUSTENBURG—THE HOSTILITY OF THE NATIVES.

MARABASTADT, though called a village, has never been proclaimed or laid out as a township. The village consists of some seven or eight houses; the district is, however, a very populous one. Since the Secocoeni war a company of the 94th Regiment have been stationed there, and the reason is apparent when there are no less than 336,000 Kaffirs in the Zoutpansberg district, and 170,000 in that adjoining—the Waterberg district. Sixty men under Captain E. S. Brooke, 94th Regiment, and Lieutenant Jones, formed the garrison, aided by thirty volunteers and fifty half-castes under Captain Thompson, when the war broke out. The fort was put in the best state of defence that circumstances would permit. Fortunately the races were being held at the time the news of the Bronkhurst Spruit affair arrived, and the English inhabitants of the neighbourhood who were present readily responded to the call of Captain Brooke to aid in the defence. The site of the fort is by no means a good one, being commanded by ridges 800 yards distant from all sides. The campaign was opened by Captain Thompson, who was attacked by the Boers when patrolling in the neighbourhood of Upsalt. He was forced to retire on the fort, with one volunteer wounded, and one Bastard killed, and four wounded. The Boers then threw up three laagers and closely invested the place. Having obtained two ship's carronades from the residence of Commissioner Dahl, they commenced firing on the fort, using as missiles iron taken from the Ersterling Gold Mining Company's works. Captain Brooke took possession of one of the hills at the rear of the fort, and held that position some time; but the Boers with their guns shelled our men out of it, killing Colour-Sergeant

Frilge, who was in command of the party. Much to the astonishment of our garrison, the enemy did not occupy the position that we evacuated; they must have feared dynamite. The fire of the Boers with their carronades was really very good, even at over a thousand yards. Every now and again our men had to make a sortie to drive them out of range. Well off for arms, ammunition, and provisions, our men worked cheerily. The Boers, had they possessed much energy, might have cut off the ordinary water supply by diverting the stream; but in view of that contingency, our garrison dug a well and made a covered way to it, so that there was really no fear of the supply failing. The fort held out till the despatches were received announcing the peace. Had the Boers occupied the position on the hill that our men were driven out of, it might have fared badly with the brave little garrison.

With regard to the siege of Rustenburg, Captain Auchinleck, ably seconded by Lieutenant H. T. Despard (21st Regiment), made a gallant and successful defence of this spot, with the aid of some sixty regulars and a handful of volunteers armed with the rifle only. Surrounded on all sides by Boer laagers, and the village which was occupied by the enemy, the defenders of the fort manfully held their own, fighting daily against superior numbers. Twice was Captain Auchinleck wounded, once in attacking a trench 400 yards distant from his position. From a hill 1200 yards away from our fort the Boers obtained a point of vantage for long rifle practice at the besieged, and night and day they kept up their fire on the fort below. It was in the district of Rustenburg that the Kaffirs assumed a very threatening attitude towards the Boers; so serious, in fact, was the aspect of affairs, that Paul Kruger himself went to see if he could not overawe the native chiefs, or at least induce them to remain quiet. How far he succeeded, and how near the Republic was at one time of losing its Vice-President, may be judged from the following narrative, taken from an official report of the Secretary for Native affairs on the matter to Sir Owen Lanyon:—

'SECRETARY FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS OFFICE,
TRANSVAAL, *March* 18, 1881.

'Since writing my report of the 31st January last, messengers have been received from the Chiefs Frederick Maghali and Maluke, both asking for leave to attack the Boers, and for powder, should the permission be given; to both, instructions were sent not to molest or interfere with the Boers. They were also told not to assist the Boers in either cattle or men, as demanded by them, and that they were at liberty to defend their lives and property by force if necessary.

'All the chiefs mentioned in my report have sent in frequently since to pay their respects, and inquire how we were getting on, and to know whether they could do anything to assist.

'The Chief Umkanhla has sent in to report that a letter sent from here to him to be conveyed into the fort at Rustenburg had been forwarded by him, but that the messenger had been captured by the Boers; that the Boers then sent to him three different messengers to go into Rustenburg to explain what he had done, and that he had refused each messenger. He then ordered all his men to come up armed, as he feared an attack from the Boers, and he at the same time sent in to say that the messenger was his man, and had been sent by him; that the messenger was not to blame, he was only obeying orders; that he, Umkanhla, was responsible; he told them that the man was in their power, and demanded his instant release, saying that if anything was done to him, the Boers would soon see what he would do. The man was released soon after this message was received by the Boers.

'Shortly after he received a message to say that Mr. Paul Kruger would pass his kraal on his way home, and that he wished Umkanhla to go there and see him. Umkanhla replied that he could not do so, and that if Mr. Kruger wished to see him he could call as he passed.

'Mr. Kruger called in passing; he was accompanied by twenty-seven armed Boers. He went into Umkanhla's house, and, after drinking coffee, asked the chief what he meant by having all his armed men up, whether he wished to fight against the Boers. Umkanhla replied that he did not wish to fight; that he considered the Boers had attacked him by taking his man prisoner; that they now were constantly patrolling through his kraals, and he was only acting on the defensive; that in sending the messenger with letters from the Government, he was only acting as Mr. Kruger himself had said he was to do, viz. that if either the Boers or the Government wanted letters forwarded he was to do so. Mr. Kruger admitted this, and then left, requesting Umkanhla, as he could not go to his house, to send a man to hear what he had to say.

Umkanhla sent the man, who returned, stating that Kruger wanted him to supply twenty men and two horses. The chief refused. Mr. Kruger, on his return to Rustenburg, again called with seventeen men, and endeavoured to get the men and horses, but was refused. He then said that he saw that the chief was an enemy and wished to fight. Umkanhla said, "No," he was only acting so as to be prepared for any eventuality. Mr. Kruger said, "If you are not an enemy, prove it by sending with me your eldest son and two men." This was refused. Mr. Kruger then asked him to give messengers to send to Cobus Maghali, a native chief living near the Crocodile River, to ask him what his intentions were. This Umkanhla also refused, saying that he had no messenger to send; that Maghali was a chief, as he was, and that if Mr. Kruger could come to him, he could go to Maghali also. Upon this Mr. Kruger got angry, and jumped up, and seized the chief by the arm, saying, "Come, you shall accompany me then." Umkanhla's men at once rushed forward and caught hold of Mr. Kruger, and pulled him off, throwing him on to the ground; others seized and disarmed his Boer escort. One native raised his axe, and was in the act of striking Mr. Kruger on the head, when his arm was arrested by the missionary, Mr. Penzhorn. Mr. Kruger and the Boers were then turned out of the house. When outside, Mr. Kruger laughed, and said, "You all got angry, and thought I was in earnest. I was only joking. Umkanhla and I have grown up together, and I am not likely to do him any injury." Mr. Kruger then again asked for two horses, saying, if they could not give, he would take them. Umkanhla replied that if he could find any horses belonging to him there, he could take them. Mr. Kruger's son then went and caught two horses, one of them being one which Mr. Kruger had long wished to purchase, and took them notwithstanding the chief's protests, and saying he would report it to the Government. He then left with the horses. Umkanhla reports also that he has been asked to go in and drive the Boers out of Rustenburg and relieve the fort, but that he replied he could not do so without instructions from the Government, and he now asks whether he is to do so or not. The Chiefs Frederick Maghali and Cobus Maghali have also sent in to ask whether they can do anything; that they hear that Umkanhla is to be attacked by the Boers, and they send to inform the Government that if he is attacked by the Boers, they will regard it as an attack on themselves, and will go to Umkanhla's assistance.'

What the attitude of other chiefs was may be gathered from reports from the same authority:—

> 'In the Zoutpansberg district, the officer commanding at Marabastadt has reported that all the native chiefs have sent in to him for instructions as to what they are to do, and offering any aid he may require, and that he has replied advising them not to interfere at all, but to remain quietly at home.
>
> 'One Zoutpansberg chief, Malipu, has a lot of mealies in his charge belonging to the Government. The Boers sent to him demanding them, but he refused; they then sent blankets and other goods to try and get them or buy others, and this also he would not consent to, saying that he knew the Governor, having been personally introduced to him at the meeting of the chiefs in the Zoutpansberg district, and that the Boers were fighting against him, and he would not aid them in any way. The Boers replied that when they had driven the English away, they would return and exterminate him.
>
> 'I regret to have to report that I have received information that some young men belonging to the Chief Masibi, living on a Boer farm in the Waterberg, have killed the Boer owner of the farm, and carried off his cattle. This was, I believe, done without the knowledge of the chief, and has not yet been officially reported, so that I cannot give any particulars, beyond stating that it is reported to have been an act of retaliation by the natives for the murder of one of their number by the Boers.
>
> 'I mention all these circumstances to show the readiness of the natives to attack their former oppressors, and the difficulty there is in restraining them, notwithstanding that, by every opportunity, strict orders are sent to the native chiefs to remain quiet.'

Chiefs without number, as soon as they heard of the peace, sent in from all parts of the Transvaal to Mr. Shepstone to know if it was true that the English were going to abandon them to the rule of the Boers. This wholesale dread of their former masters by the Kaffirs is strong evidence of the assertion that up to the time of the annexation the Dutch ruled them with a rod of iron, if there is no harsher term that may be applied to the matter. Take the following letter as a sample of the piteous despairing cries which the Kaffirs raised to the Englishman:—

'Bethanie, *March* 30, 1881.

'Having through Mr. Dennison's kindness received a copy of the agreement entered into by Her Royal Majesty's Government with the Boer leaders, I hasten to inquire from your Honour orders in respect to me and my people.

'Please have the great kindness to answer me the following questions:—

'1. Are you English really defeated?

'2. When does your Honour leave the country?

'3. When and where is the Royal Commission to sit?

'4. Is it really peace, and may everybody go unmolested where he likes?

'5. Is the road to Pretoria free, so that my people may buy and sell?

'6. When will the post be re-opened?

'I'm very sad, because I thought your Honour would always be my father, and foster me, but now you leave the country and us to our fate!

'Oh, may your Honour, before leaving the country, not forget to do something for the black population of Transvaal, so that they may bless you! Oh, might the Commission make a paragraph to protect us from unjust treatment or the like! May your Honour, who has to now been our father, do acts of a father for his children, whom he leaves! May your Honour think of your child Magate, so that nobody dare take revenge! Oh, make a peace which will also be a real peace to us black people!

'All this which I write are the prayers of the hearts of me and my people. For God's sake, don't forget us in the peace you make!

'I pray your Honour to write me a few lines and send me your orders. I would also be very thankful to receive a few newspapers.

'Here everything is quiet and in order.

'Awaiting your Honour's orders,—I am, with best compliments from my teacher, my old father, and people, your Honour's most obedient and humble servant,

'Jacobus More (Mamagalie), Chief of the Bakwena.

'The Honourable H. C. Shepstone,
Secretary for Native Affairs, Pretoria.'

Space does not permit of my touching further on this subject of the feelings of the natives towards the Boers after experiencing a term of British rule. I will, before leaving the subject, simply add that the conciliatory and explanatory address delivered by Mr. Shepstone to the assembled chiefs at Pretoria, at a later period, brought no relief to the minds of these simple men, and they expressed themselves to that effect.

My opinion is that the next war in the Transvaal will be between white and black men. Whatever precautions may be adopted by the British Government for the protection of the Kaffirs, the Boers must and will control the black men in the Transvaal; and those black men, having once tasted the greater measure of liberty and freedom which the English allow to the Kaffir, those Kaffirs will never settle down until they have tried conclusions once more with their Dutch masters. The Transvaal State Government may do their best to foster peace and quietness, and to remove all cause of complaint on the part of the Kaffirs, but the Boer as an individual will always regard and treat the native as a dog. The Boer cannot be watched; to ascertain what the people—the farmers—of the Transvaal are doing, it would be necessary to set a detective to watch every household. When one's next-door neighbour is from five to ten miles away, there is not any publicity and free intercourse which marks the social life of people dwelling in localities more thickly populated, and the error must not be allowed to enter the mind of any one that the Kaffir of the Transvaal, if aggrieved or oppressed, will represent the matter to the British Resident. From the moment that the black man became convinced that the Boers had beaten the English, and the English had tamely submitted to the thrashing, the power of England immediately faded in the esteem of the Kaffir. Henceforth to the Kaffir in South Africa the English are only a third-rate power, the basis of circulation being this:—The Kaffir has beaten the Dutchman, the Dutchman has beaten the Englishman: the order of priority then is, No. 1, the Kaffir; No. 2, the Dutchman; No. 3, the Englishman.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SIEGE OF WAKKERSTROOM—THE SEIZURE OF UTRECHT AND MIDDLEBURG.

OF Wakkerstroom, more correctly termed Marthinus Wesselstroom, it may briefly be said that the defence of the place was conspicuous for plucky and daring gallantry. A handful of regulars and loyalists, some seventy in all, held their own without surrendering up to the end. They had everything against them. The district was a notoriously hostile one; and so near Laing's Nek that a day's ride from the latter point would suffice to allow of an offensive movement against the fort. The day following Christmas day (1880), a report was brought into Wakkerstroom, by a refugee, that it was the intention of the Boers to attack the town after the meeting at Grass Kop on the following Tuesday. In the meantime preparations had been made by Captain Saunders, 58th Regiment, to fortify the court-house; but this position was subsequently abandoned, and the Dutch church occupied by a detachment of thirty men of the 58th Regiment, and fortified in the usual manner, *i.e.* surrounded by a ditch and loopholed.

Sunday, 26th December, happened to be 'Nacht Mal,' a religious gathering of the farmers, and a large number of Boers were consequently in Wakkerstroom. These seeing the active defence operations of the military fatigue parties, and hearing vague rumours of dynamite mines, immediately commenced to strike their tents, inspan their oxen, and trek.

The Boers have since confessed it was on account of the report that dynamite had been placed in and about the town that they had not ventured to attack it, and had confined their attentions to looting cattle and horses straying on the outskirts.

There were about 120 non-commissioned officers and men of the 58th Regiment, under the command of Captain Saunders, garrisoned at a fort partially commanding the town. At Wakkerstroom, when hostilities commenced, besides the relief party of thirty men detached to occupy the Dutch church, ten men were told off to defend the western entrance to the town. A store was fortified at that point for the purpose. The civilians then formed themselves into a town guard, and elected Mr. E. Archer as their captain. They mustered about forty-five men and boys, about half of whom were mounted, the remainder dismounted; and their duties consisted of guarding the approaches to the town by night, and patrolling the neighbourhood by day. The mounted men paraded daily, and were instructed principally in mounted skirmishing drill by Mr. Aubyn Margary.

Too much praise cannot be given to Captain Saunders for his skilful defence of Wakkerstroom. Worthy of mention was the mounting of an old 4-pound naval howitzer on the body of a water-cart. This was placed in a position in front of the church door, and tended to frighten the Boers, if it did not injure them. The erection of a 'crow's nest' commanding a view of the suburbs, and the construction of a telephone whereby communication with the church and fort was maintained, are amongst the works planned by Captain Saunders' fertile brain. Necessary precautions having been taken, the stock of provisions, subsequently supplemented by the arrival of wagons containing Government rations during the first armistice, were sufficient to have enabled the garrison to hold out some time longer. The scarcity of flour was felt, but biscuits formed a tolerable substitute. Vegetables, of course, were only within the reach of a few.

It was impossible for the garrison to estimate at any time the number of the enemy actually investing the town. At times there would be 300 or 400, when raids on stock were apparently intended; on other occasions the surrounding farmhouses, of which there were about six within a radius of two miles, were occupied by small parties of Boers, for the purpose of watching the town, and preventing communication by post or otherwise with the outer world. In spite of the enemy's vigilance, several men succeeded in reaching Newcastle, and on no occasion was the native post intercepted, although occasionally delayed by the state of the rivers or presence of the enemy.

Wakkerstroom is situated on a flat surrounded by hills, from which bullets could reach the town in many places. The river, however, formed excellent protection on the north side, particularly from surprise, being flooded during this unusually wet season.

The siege was comparatively uneventful, and consisted principally of raids and reprisals on both sides, the dull monotony at other times being varied by the usual exciting rumours, by whom circulated nobody ever could find out. These rumours, however, created occasional 'scares,' and the distant sound of the guns at Laing's Nek, the Ingogo, and Majuba fights were heard, and created intense excitement.

A besieged garrison is seldom at a loss for amusement. Wakkerstroom had its share of cricket, football, minstrelsy, etc., and a manuscript newspaper was started by Mr. Margary, and illustrated by Mr. Rock.

It was difficult during the siege to ascertain whether the investing foes comprised Boers only. Afterwards it was discovered that a force of about 500 Kaffirs had been organised by one Andius Klas, and were for a time encamped a few miles off, for the express purpose of being 'let loose' on the town. That is now a circumstance of history unchallenged.

The garrison was much indebted to Mr. Fawcus, C.E., for his gallantry on several occasions in ascertaining the strength and position of the enemy. His temerity was rewarded by his being taken prisoner on town lands, and under the eye of the British. He was then marched off to Laing's Nek, and a few days after made his escape to Newcastle, in an adventurous manner.

A raid made by twenty-five mounted men and fifty refugee Kaffirs, under Mtonga, son of Mtanda, supported by infantry on Naudee's farm, resulted in the capture of 150 of the enemy's horses. These on the conclusion of peace were handed back to the owners, free of charge.

There were happily no casualties among the civilians during the siege; not so fortunate, however, were the military, who, under the following circumstances, had three men wounded, two of whom died the same night, and were buried with the usual military honours:—

One morning shots were exchanged between our scouts and the enemy's, which was the signal for the mounted men to saddle up and join in the skirmish. The enemy also sent supports to their scouts, and after an interval the engagement became general. Our men being numerically inferior were driven back, and retraced in good order, fighting. Up to this time there were two of the regulars wounded; one was left on the field, the other was gallantly rescued from under fire and brought out by Private May of the 58th Regiment. Very shortly, however, a chance bullet killed the gallant rescuer of a wounded comrade. The mounted men now fell back on the fort, and the Boers made signs to our force to bring relief to the wounded man, Private Bennet, who had been left on the field.

One of the Boers, tearing off his own shirt to make a flag with, brought the dying man water. The enemy then retired, and a fatigue party from our fort went out and brought in the wounded man. An amputation of a limb was considered necessary, but that operation he did not survive.

Utrecht and Middleburg at the outbreak of hostilities fell into the hands of the enemy, without any resistance being possible on the part of the loyal inhabitants. The following particulars respecting the first-mentioned place are supplied in a report by the Landdrost or magistrate, dated April 8, 1881 :—

'On the 28th day of December last, an armed force of Boers, under Ignatius Ferreira, who was called field cornet, collected at the powder magazine in the old civil laager at this place. Three Boers, named Jacobus Uy Janson, Gideon van de Venter, and Theunis Viljoen, armed, came to me at my house and demanded in the name of Field Cornet Ferreira the keys of the magazine. I refused to give the keys, saying that I did not recognise Ferreira as having any right to demand the keys from me. The three men, after making some threatening remarks, rode away. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Bruins, the magazine master, came and informed me that the magazine had been broken open by the Boers, and ammunition taken, and that the Boers were very angry as they found that there was so small a quantity of ammunition,—I had sent the bulk of ammunition, etc. to Newcastle,—and that the gunpowder was unserviceable. The gunpowder, I was informed, they threw into the water. Ferreira in the afternoon hoisted the South African flag, and went with his men to the Dutch Reformed church. Messrs. M'Kay, Robins, Hicks, and others went to the place. They informed me that Ferreira read a proclamation and gave them some information. As communications to Pretoria were cut off, I communicated everything to the High Commissioner, and received His Excellency's instructions up to Sunday the 2d January (the day before I was made prisoner). I had applied for help for this place, but was informed that no help could be given, and that I should not defend myself if I saw that the enemy was too strong. I held a meeting to ascertain on what number of men I could depend, and although the larger number of the townspeople were loyal, only nine men came forward for defending ourselves. Those that did not come forward to sign their names said that if we made any demonstration for defending ourselves it would only exasperate the Boers, and as we had no troops we became helpless. Ferreira then guarded the town on the Newcastle sides; several families of loyal people had previously fled to Newcastle. My own family, on an application to Ferreira, by my son-in-law of Natal, was allowed to cross into Natal on the 30th. I was in the meantime closely watched till the morning of Monday the 3d January, when Louis Viljoen entered the town from the Newcastle side, bringing in with him Ferreira's guard, there being about from 80 to 100 men all armed, Hendrik Davil, who fell at Ingogo, carrying the flag of the South African Republic. Viljoen with Ferreira walked up to me in the door of my house, whilst the whole force was ranged between my house and the office. Ferreira said, "This is Commandant Viljoen;" upon which Viljoen demanded the keys of the office. Viljoen got angry, and said in strong and angry voice, "Weigert gy?" "Do you refuse?" looking back towards his men at the same time. I said I protested in the name of the Queen of England, whose official I was, against the office being taken from me. Viljoen said, "Give up the key at once"; and seeing that the Commandant and the people became excited, I fetched the keys from my front room, and said to the Commandant that I gave up the keys under force and protest. Viljoen then said that I was to go over to the office to open it, which I refused. Viljoen crossed the street, and opened the office, and then sent back four men to bring me over to the office. When I was inside he demanded the key of the safe, and from my clerk all moneys in his possession. I handed over my cash-box, which, however, contained only treasury cheques to an amount of £103, 19s. 2d. My collections for December were only £103, 8s. 6d. There was a balance of 10s. 8d. in addition to this sum that I have given as collected. As soon as Viljoen had done with me in this manner, he made me prisoner, by order of P. J. Joubert, their General, as he said, and set an armed guard over me in my own house, giving me notice to be ready in two hours' time to start to Joubert's.

'I saw Mr. Viljoen take over from Mr. Scheffer all stamps and some coin, being revenue stamp fees and postage fees. I was taken before Mr. Joubert the following day at Meek's farm, when he sent me a prisoner to Heidelberg, where I was, although well treated, kept closely guarded in a small separate room near the gaol, till I was released on my word of honour, my health on account of the strict confinement having begun to fail. On the evening of the day on which I was locked up in Heidelberg, Messrs. Jorissen and Bok called and said that I was a state prisoner, and that I would be well treated. The officials were kind, but some of my guards behaved rudely, particularly at night-time. After my release by Mr. Joubert at Heidelberg, I proceeded with Field Cornet C. Breytenbach to see Sir Evelyn Wood, and by His Excellency's instructions came here to resume my office. My friends, the loyal burghers of Utrecht, came over to Newcastle to fetch me over. They suffered very much during the war. I arrived here (Utrecht) on the 4th inst., and found my office empty of everything except a table. In fact, it was a cow kraal. I have been working hard since to make it inhabitable. Mr. Joubert has *not* yet sent back the office papers, etc. I found some official documents on the floor of the office in the cow dung and straw. Some disloyals have returned, and closed their doors on me when I approached their houses on my returning. The meeting of the loyals referred to above was held the day before Ferreira came into town. My life was threatened at the time, and it was openly said by Ferreira that Sir Owen Lanyon had ordered innocent Boers and their families to be attacked, and why should loyals expect anything better at the hands of the Boers? I concealed the Government advance of £29, 5s., witnesses' expenses, etc., which is still with Mrs. Rudolph. Mr. Scheffer informs me that he deducted his December salary from the money Viljoen took from him, but did not let Viljoen know it. The native population of this district remained truly loyal to the Government. Much stock was commandeered from them. My dwelling-house has been much damaged, and furniture injured, but not much. I shall send for my family as soon as I shall have put my house in repair. I luckily managed to get all telegrams and letters between the late High Commissioner, Colonel Deane, and myself, which would have been bad for me had the Boers got them in hand, into Natal before I was apprehended. It is impossible to give particulars in writing of all the difficulties and danger which we had to endure.'

The fate of Utrecht was the fate of Middleburg: Boer sympathizers and Boers were too many for any scheme of defence to be initiated, much less successfully carried out.

Two gentlemen made their escape from Middleburg early in the campaign, and after riding and walking thence to Delagoa Bay, arrived at Durban by the Union steamship *Natal.* The accounts of their adventures and of life among the Boers are replete with interest. The names of the gentlemen are Mr. A. W. Cumming, of Pretoria, clerk to Major Clarke, on the Native Reserve Land Commission; and Mr. John H. Walker, assistant surveyor to Mr. A. Walker, surveyor, and engaged on the same Commission. Mr. Cumming states that he arrived at Middleburg on October 26, Major Clarke having gone on to Natal.

On hearing of the slaughter of the 94th Regiment at Bronkhurst Spruit, the English and loyal inhabitants of Middleburg held a meeting in order to devise means to defend the town. It was found it would be impossible to do this on account of the scarcity of provisions. On the afternoon of the 22d December, Jacobus Coetzee and De Klerk galloped into the town, and dismounting, they 'cocked' their rifles and presented them at the breast of the magistrate (Mr. C. von Brandis), demanding the keys of the Government offices and the post office. Mr. von Brandis was in peril of his life, and, seeing it would be useless to resist, delivered up the keys. There were about forty Englishmen in the town. The keys were delivered to the two Dutchmen, who were intoxicated. On the 23d (next day) from 80 to 100 armed Boers entered the town, and took possession of the Government offices, and hoisted the Republican flag. They gave out that all who committed offence would be punished according to the laws of the South African Republic. On the 24th (Christmas Eve) meetings were held, the English being summoned to attend them. At these meetings the war was discussed, and the names of the new officials to be appointed in the town were announced. Mr. Cumming had a Government wagon, ten oxen, and a quantity of provisions, and they were confiscated by the Boers. On the same day fifteen Englishmen were arrested and kept in the court-house for a night and part of Christmas Day. About half-past one on Christmas morning, Mr. Cumming was taken out of bed by six armed men, and marched off to the court-house, where he remained two hours. He was then taken to the gaol along with Mr. Rehbock, the public prosecutor, and Mr. Munnich, sheriff.

There were no charges laid against them, and they were kept in the gaol till five o'clock that evening. They were then liberated, with a caution to remain quiet, and not to leave the town without a pass, and not to be out after nine o'clock at night under a penalty. If they did not answer when called upon after that hour, they would be shot. On Christmas Eve, Commandant Grove said he had authority to shoot the whole fifteen Englishmen he had taken into custody, and he felt a great inclination to do it. A young Englishman told him it was more than his head was worth to shoot any Englishman, although he might speak of it. Nothing more came of that; but it may be mentioned here that the same Englishman (Freeman) was afterwards fired at, and fined £5 next morning. Every one had to pay 6d. for a pass to go outside the town. Every storekeeper in the town was commandeered to pay £300, and some had to pay £350; but the largest store in the town—that belonging to Mr. Barrett, and having goods worth £5000 or £6000—was taken entire possession of by the Boers. Tea and coffee ran short soon as well as candles and paraffin, the latter being sold at £5 a case. Some kind of tallow candles could be bought from a woman, who made them at five for a shilling. Hotelkeepers had strict orders to serve no Englishman with liquor who had not a pass granted for the purpose by the Boers. One young loyal Dutchman refused to act on guard, and he was tied hand and foot and put in the stocks for four days. He was then put in prison, having suffered very much from the treatment he had received; but he stedfastly refused to assist the disloyal Boers. He was released shortly before Mr. Cumming left. Two English storekeepers were brought to the town from Fort Weeber and put into prison, where they still were, getting food as best they could from the hotel. Mr. Walker, one of the adventurers, was surveying in Mapoch's country with the chief. They were at Mapoch's stronghold, which was under a strong guard—always 150—of natives. Mapoch took Mr. Walker and his chief under his protection; but the Boers riding near one day saw them, and by treachery lured them away. They told them on the 17th of January that they would give them a written guarantee that their lives and property would be secure if they left and accompanied them to Middleburg. Thinking they were honest, they left Mapoch's stronghold; but the moment the party got out of Mapoch's country, their guns, horses, and property were taken from them, and they were sent with a wagon to Middleburg. There a charge was brought against them of attempting to incite Mapoch's men against the Boers. One, Mr. Rissik, was allowed out of prison on bail of £1000, Mr. Wommore standing bail; and Mr. Walker was allowed out without bail. He was told, however, that he would have to go through a mock trial, and then be shot. He heard three or four Boers say they would shoot Mr. Rissik. On the 24th of February, Dr. Ward came into Middleburg for medicine for the troops wounded at Bronkhurst Spruit. He reported that they were all doing well, and Lieutenant Hume—the only surviving officer—was able to walk about. Captain Eckersley, a native commissioner, was also put in prison at Middleburg. Many of the Boers behaved very insolently to the English, saying they would like to cut every Englishman's throat. One day, when they had got a pass outside the town, Messrs. Cumming and Walker saw the road was comparatively clear, and they made a run for it. They had only their horses with them, a dog, and a tin of biscuits. On this they lived for a week, and endured great hardship, the dog faithfully getting his share of the small daily ration of biscuit. When they got to the Swazie king, the refugees were very well treated by His Majesty, who was fervent in his protestations of loyalty to Her Majesty. He had given strict orders that his army should sleep in their shields to be ready to fight for England if necessary. He gave the wanderers an important message for the Commander-in-Chief of the English forces. They left their horses at the Swazie king's kraal, and endured great misery from swollen feet in their walk to Delagoa Bay.

Perhaps I have done the magistrate of Middleburg an injustice by not quoting his personal testimony, as printed in the Blue Book, of events at Middleburg. It is well worth reproducing even now, not because of the additional information it imparts, but as an illustration of the high intelligence of the officials whom Sir Owen Lanyon employed to administer justice in the Transvaal.

Mr. C. von Brandis, the magistrate of Middleburg, thus reported on separate occasions:—

'MIDDLEBURG, *April* 16, 1881.

'Sir,—I have the honour to report that the Boers are still in possession of the offices, with their flag up, refusing to give the keys and office up, etc., which all is still the case to-day, the 16th April 1881, three weeks after the peace, and I cannot do my work, having no references, no books, nor forms to make my accounts up.—I have, etc., 'C. VON BRANDIS, Landdrost.

'The Honourable Colonial Secretary, Pretoria.'

'MIDDLEBURG, *April* 18, 1881.

'SIR,—I have the honour to state that I will not fail to obey the instructions, and so report again that the offices are still in the hands of the Boers, with the flag of theirs up, and a guard in front of the offices.—I have, etc.,

'C. VON BRANDIS, Landdrost.

'The Honourable George Hudson,
Colonial Secretary, Pretoria.'

His first account of events was:—

'MIDDLEBURG, *April* 13, 1881.

'SIR,—I have the honour to report, for the information of His Excellency the Administrator, the circumstances connected with the late insurrection of, and the surrender of, this village to the Boers up to above date. On the 16th December 1880, when everything was quite still and as usual, notwithstanding the events at Potchefstrom being known, I left this for the High Veldt, accompanied by my daughter, to hold a branch court at the residence of Mr. A. Stein, about six hours on horseback, and returned on Saturday the 18th December 1880, towards evening (the Nacht Mal being held), when I was informed by Mr. Rehbock, the Landdrost clerk, that there were rumours of a hostile and armed rising of the Boers, which I altogether discredited, as I had heard nothing in the High Veldt (where most of the discontented live), and where the loyal Boers I met, and with whom I stayed, ridiculed the idea of the Boers fighting the English; and I kept the opinion I always had—the Boers would never fight, as I always found them in private and officially friendly, and the contrary to hostile, except grumbling. Afterwards there came some of the few loyal persons here, who told me the same as Mr. Rehbock, expressing as their opinion there would be most likely fighting; and that it was sure that the 94th Regiment, *en route* to Pretoria, would be attacked somewhere near D. Muller's farm where thorn trees stand. I then thought it better—although against my opinion—to try and do something, if possible, for defending the village against a possible attack by the Boers, and sent on Sunday, the 19th December 1880, Mr. Rehbock to the station asking Mr. Merenski to send me fifty Kaffirs or more at once, to make some walls and fortifications; but only on my second request, of Monday the 20th December 1880, did I get thirty-seven Kaffirs, who came on *Tuesday the 21st at twelve o'clock noon*; I had in the meantime marked the lines where walls should be made, and connecting the office with Messrs. Barrett's store and residence by a covered passage for the women and children. (I must here remark that no martial law was proclaimed. I saw the proclamation the first time during this month on the 5th of April 1881.—The last post arrived here on the 16th December 1880; since then we never had any communication with Pretoria until the 7th and 8th April 1881.) When tracing the above lines with the prisoners on Monday the 20th December 1880, just after I had married a couple, an old friendly Boer, I think Bekker is his name, came to me and said, "I know what you intend making there, but I tell you it is too late; desist. The Boer commando will take this place to-morrow or a day after." I said nothing, and went on with my work, sending again for the Kaffirs to come (I must here remark that, according to my opinion,—I was an officer in the Austrian and a captain in the English army for fifteen years, was in the wars of 1848 and 1849 in Italy,—there is not a single house in this place fit to defend or to be put into a defensible state, as every one can be fired into from all sides out of the surrounding houses, and the whole west side of this town belongs to people bitterly inimical to the English and English rule) to commence the walls, etc., as I thought if *all* loyal—twenty-five *in all*, counting the strangers, Messrs. Eckersley, Cumming, etc.—stick to me, I will try and hold the office, which I had barricaded inside with 100 muids of mealies, and Barrett's store and residence (I must here remark that no martial law being proclaimed, and no soldiers being here, I could not force any one to assist me, nor could I commandeer anything to effect this). I summoned a meeting of all persons loyal to Her Majesty on the 21st December 1880, at ten o'clock A.M., telling them of the warlike rumours, and reading portion of Government Secretary's letter of the 14th December 1880, received by me on the 18th December 1880, and asked all those who would stand to me for the Queen to sign their names. The number signed was twenty-five (including the strangers). After that I ordered to bring on sand and stones, as the ground is unfit for making walls of sods; and when the Kaffirs arrived, *21st December* 1880, *at twelve o'clock noon*, the walls were commenced in front of Barrett's residence (where the women and children should come);

and the loopholes were just begun when tidings came that the detachment of the 94th Regiment, who had departed here on the 16th December 1880, were all massacred by the Boers on Monday the 20th December 1880; and I got information from Mr. Brurhill, a loyal subject, that many of those persons who signed to stand or fall with me said it was useless to resist, and this reaction left me only about ten or fifteen men I could rely on. In the meantime there also came the report that a commando of 600 Boers were at N. Prinsloo's farm, one hour from here, and another also one hour's ride at G. Van Niekerk's. I then determined not to resist, but to surrender. I thought this to be my duty as a good soldier and loyal man, and that I could not sacrifice the lives and property of these few without the slightest hope or prospect of success and benefit to the Government. To demonstrate how little we expected the outbreak, and how unusually silent and secret the Boers kept their intentions, I must here state, beside my going (with my daughter) to the High Veldt, passing and meeting many patriots, Mrs. von Brandis, with my other daughter and Mr. Cumming, went to Major Clarke's wagon to Van Niekerk's farm on the 17th December 1880, and saw there a great many wagons and Boers, without hearing or suspecting anything; and this Niekerk is an arch-patriot or anti-English. And another thing that the Boers had here was Nacht Mal from the 18th to 20th December 1880, while they came to the office as usual, without letting anything out.

'To defend the town or a portion of it was totally out of my power; there is not, as already stated, a house or place that can serve or could be made to serve as a fort or fortified laager, and wherein the women and children with the defenders could be sheltered, or wherein the provisions could be safely kept. The anti-English are nearly as strong as the loyals, besides some neutrals. The Boers got every and any information from the townspeople, treachery in and outside. I had no soldiers, no martial law was proclaimed, and the Boers collecting at once at one hour's ride from this place on the farms of Prinsloo and Van Niekerk for the taking of the town, after the massacre of the 94th Regiment, and all which we were informed of at once, stopped all idea of going on with the making of defence work which could not be half completed. But should, after this my explanation, His Excellency think I could have acted otherwise than I have done; should His Excellency have the least doubt as to my acting in this surrender otherwise than as a loyal and faithful servant, good soldier and gentleman, and think I could have defended the town; then I hope and request that His Excellency will be fair and just to me by instituting an inquiry by a competent impartial military commission, who will declare me a coward or an officer who has done his duty to God and men.

'On Wednesday the 22d December 1880, at about six o'clock P.M. (the Boer commando was expected any moment), I stood with Mr. Cumming and some others in the street, not far from the office, where I had been to remove the 100 muids of mealies with which the windows had been barricaded, when two Boers came riding in, armed, at a gallop, from the direction of Prinsloo, where the Boer commando was then (one hour from here), came straight up to me, dismounted quickly, and placed a loaded gun at my body, capped and ready, while the other Boer also stood ready, demanding the keys of the office. I, seeing them half-drunk and flushed with victory (one, De Clercy, had come from the massacre of the 94th Regiment, and was the adjutant of the Commandant Grove, at Prinsloo's, which I learned afterwards), saw no other chance to save my life, being unarmed, but to hand the keys, and when I asked by whose authority, they said by the Voorman's "leader." "We see no scharzen (fortifications), and therefore the village and the inhabitants are safe." After that they rode down to the gaol, took the keys from the gaoler, and liberated all prisoners; and then rode about in the streets, carrying the Boer flag, and screaming and rejoicing about liberty, and I do not know what all. The one Boer, Jacobus Coetzee, who pointed the loaded gun at me within an inch of my body, is a very bitter enemy to the English and the English Government, as all the Coetzees are who inhabit this village.

'On Thursday the 23d December 1880, at eleven o'clock A.M., the Boers, under Commandant Grove, J. Joubert, and others,—they had been informed by De Clercy, who fetched the key as aforesaid, that no resistance would be made, and that the fortifications had been broken off,—about 120 to 150 strong, entered the village, in front the flag-bearer with the South African Republic flag, hoisted this flag over the office, and took possession of the office, of twenty-eight Government guns, 2000 cartridges, £41, 7s. 6d. in gold and silver, one wagon with mules of Mr. Shepstone, one wagon with oxen of Major Clarke, whose private stores and writing materials, press, etc., they also took; after that they related publicly from the wall in front of the office the affair with the 94th Regiment. They read their proclamation of re-establishment of the Republic, etc. They arrested my clerk, Mr. Rehbock, and sent him on 30th December 1880 to Heidelberg; the reason was not given. Afterwards several other arrests were made—of Messrs. Eckersley, Cumming, the sheriff, Adam, Jonk, Rissik, Walker, Thomson, Rademeyer. They were let free afterwards, with or without bail, except the two latter, who were sent to Heidelberg. With the exception of this, the closing of Barrett's store, the taking of their cattle, the heavy war contributions in cash, horses, saddles, bridles, cattle, the taking away of all our arms and ammunition from us loyals, the Boers did not behave badly in general under the circumstances. There are always brutal deeds and transgressions committed on such occasions as this revolt, which will be brought to the knowledge of the Royal Commission by the parties who suffered; but I can truly say, considering the circumstances, the behaviour of the Boers in general was good and lenient.

'During the war the strictest guard was kept, and the cutting off of all communication with the outer world was so complete and so strictly carried out by the Boers, that no person was able to inform the Government or any one of how things went on; even the women had to have a pass when going out outside the village, and the Kaffirs coming or going were searched and accompanied by guards in the village, so that no one could talk to them.

'What I have to complain of is the breaking of the treaty by the Boers (reported to you per express on the 8th April 1881), in not restoring the offices immediately after the 24th March 1881, and the not taking down of their flag. The offices are not restored to this date, the 13th April 1881; they have not restored our guns, ammunition, nor the horses or cattle they commandeered, or only partly. I also complain that heavy war contributions have been forced from us loyals on the 23d and 24th March 1881 (*from those only who intended to resist and commenced fortifications*), which were never sent to the army on account of peace having been made on 24th March 1881, but not returned as yet.

'The Boers have commandeered from me in cash £13, *three excellent horses*, two saddles, two bridles.

'1 salted, value £50, not returned.
'1 salted, ,, £75, returned, but cripple and stiff.
'1 unsalted, ,, £35, returned all right.
Saddles and bridles returned.

'They have taken from me by force—

'Breech-loading	1 W. Richards rifle, value . .	£15
	1 M. Henry „ „ . .	30
	1 double-barrel fowling-piece, value	30
	'600 cartridges, „	10
	'1 revolver, „	5

'They have taken from the sheriff all his horses and one revolver; I believe one horse is returned in the most pitiful condition. His saddles and bridles were also taken, and he had to buy new headstalls before they took the horses.—I have, etc.,

'C. von Brandis, Landdrost, District Middleburg.

'The Honourable the Colonial Secretary, Pretoria.'

I think this closes the history of the period of war in the Transvaal. There is little to add save some information as to the assemblage of the Volksraad, the Royal Commission, and other matters concerning the peace arrangements.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TREKKING SOUTH—THE FIRST MEETING OF THE BOER VOLKSRAAD—WAITING FOR THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

RETURNING to Pretoria from Potchefstrom, I found the townspeople had been busy burning for the second time in effigy the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone, and preparing a petition to the House of Commons. This was to be taken to England by a deputation, including Mr. White.

The sittings of the High Court in Pretoria had to be suspended *sine die*, as there were no means of enforcing its decrees. Property everywhere was being offered for sale, but without the hope of bidders being found; men were pouring out of the city for Natal and the Diamond Fields, especially the artisan class. No mails had been received here from down country, and so there was still on the 17th April no reliable news to hand. The Boers were holding their Nacht Mal, and the square was crowded with wagons and tents; but so far there had been no collisions between the two people.

But for an inordinate amount of drinking going on, and a general disposition to lounge instead of to work, there was nothing about Pretoria to lead one to the conclusion that half its inhabitants were brought suddenly face to face with comparative beggary, and that all had just undergone the hardships of a three months' siege. As there was a probability of the Royal Commission meeting in public, I turned south again, and had a fairly miserable and solitary ride back. Any incidents or information I acquired on the road worth reproducing I will give hereunder, as written at the time, showing the feeling of the hour, which can be compared now with settled events :—

ROOI KOPJES
(Half-way between Heidelberg and Standerton),
April 20, 1881.

I have often heard biltong spoken of disparagingly. From personal experience of this food, I can tell you that it is most excellent, and anything but despicable meat. Perhaps the circumstances under which I ate it prevent me being an impartial judge of the quality of biltong. After three hours spent at night in the veldt among boulders, soaked to the skin by a heavy, driving, cold rain, in a vain endeavour to find the road, one is not apt to be fastidious if biltong, coffee, and a bed of Indian corn shocks in an outhouse is offered. For such hospitality I am indebted to a Dutch farmer. This morning he would not hear of payment for the accommodation given to man and horse. He must be of a very different mould to a Boer who charged a friend of mine, belated between Potchefstrom and Pretoria, one half-crown for a glass of milk and another half-crown for half a loaf of bread, and into the bargain threw in the loan of his stable for the accommodation of the weary one. But charges in the Transvaal at present are of a very variable nature. At one roadside house you will have to pay double the amount for less value received than you will be charged at the next stage, twenty miles distant. Those who have stocks of any kind are selling out, and those who have nothing left in their stores are not ordering supplies; I only know of one exception, viz. at Heidelberg. They say it would not be prudent in them to lay in large stocks, because they know not when the Boers will begin commandeering again.

That the Boers consider they have at this moment in their own hands the direction and supreme control of the affairs of the country, may be gathered from this document, served on a gentleman in Pretoria:—

'TO MR. W. JENNINGS.

'HARTEBEESTEFONTEIN, *April* 11, 1881.

'SIR,—I have heard you are back at home. I give you notice that an attachment is made on all your movable and immovable property by the Government of the South African Republic, and that I, as field cornet of the division, warn you that you shall make no use of anything on your farm, or you will be answerable, until after the decision of the appointed Commission.—So I name myself your servant,

'F. P. SENEKAL, Assistant Field Cornet.'

Everywhere you hear the same opinion, that the present state of suspense is unsatisfactory. For this opinion there is a good amount of reason. There was before the meeting of the Volksraad; and since it has been clearly set down by that body that the Boers will fight to the last drop of their blood before they will allow the English to take one inch of the Transvaal, it follows that Englishmen are very diffident in engaging in commercial speculations in the country. The above was not, it is true, officially recorded in the minutes of the meeting. It happened in this way: that one gentleman, who had the full courage of his convictions, rose and propounded fearlessly that theory, and he was immediately applauded to the echo. It may be taken for granted that not one-third of the Boers who were at the Nek, or one-third of the Boer population at the time the peace was made, had heard anything about the proposal of the British to take some portion of the country east of the 30th parallel. Now the knowledge has come to them, they totally object to any such proposal. The whole of the Transvaal or nothing they will have, if it can be gained by fighting for it. Paul Kruger, I believe, with others, who are men of sense, fear the future. The wise men know that if the Boers persist in their demands, they will probably overreach themselves. By their greediness they might likely lose what is now offered to them—in fact, lose the advantage which is within their grasp. Flushed with victory, imbued thoroughly with the idea that the 10,000 English soldiers said to be in Natal are all the men available for warlike purposes, reckoning with confidence on the co-operation of the Free State and the Cape Colony, the Boers might stick too stubbornly to untenable ideas. This depends entirely on public opinion at home. The Boers do not know what a weathercock public opinion is. If public opinion decides against the settlement of to-day, then Mr. Gladstone will either have to appeal to the country or change his tactics. The opportunity of changing once more his opinions will be a splendid one if the Boers persist in having the whole of the Transvaal, because the Boers will have been guilty of a breach of the agreement come to between their leaders and the British, namely, 'to accept the decision of the Royal Commission.' If there is another outbreak of hostilities, I do not think it will be under the Presidentship of Mr. Paul Kruger. Known throughout as one who counselled moderation, he now sees with sorrow this inclination of the Boers to grasp everything, and his retirement would probably follow any renewal of the fight.

In Heidelberg I was fortunate in meeting Mr. Bok and in having a conversation with him on several topics. He is evidently a man of considerable shrewdness, business-like and courteous.

The 'Secretaris' is the youngest of the active official body, and a native of Holland, although his family reside in Brussels. He is a good specimen of an educated foreigner. His command of the English language and acquaintance with its literature is extensive. About thirty years of age, he is a studious, thoughtful, and withal gay, genial man, who will probably make his mark.

Mr. Bok was good enough to give me an official translation of the speech of Mr. Paul Kruger to the Volksraad at Heidelberg:—

ADDRESS OF HIS HONOUR THE VICE-PRESIDENT ON BEHALF OF THE TRIUMVIRATE.

'HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE VOLKSRAAD,—I have called you together as representatives of the people, to inform you, as far as I am now able to do so, of what has been done by the Government since it was entrusted to them by your Assembly on the 14th December 1880, at Paarde Kraal, to do everything that was necessary for the restoration of our independence. I lay before you the papers and documents issued by Government. With a feeling of gratitude to the God of our fathers, who has been near to us in battle and in danger, it is to me an unspeakable privilege to be able to lay before you the treaty of peace entered into at O'Neill's farm between us and Sir Evelyn Wood as plenipotentiary of the British Government, and bearing dates 21st and 23d of March 1881. All further particulars concerning the matter the Government will furnish to you by word of mouth. I consider it my duty plainly to declare before you and before the whole world, that our respect for Her Majesty the Queen of England, for the Government of Her Majesty, and for the English nation, has never been greater than at this time, when we are enabled in this treaty to show you a proof of England's noble and magnanimous love for right and justice. From the treaty of peace you will see, honourable gentlemen, that still an important part in the regulation of affairs in this country has been left to a Royal Commission. I confidently declare to you my belief that this Royal Commission will thoroughly and in all respects complete the work of justice so nobly commenced on the 21st and 23d March last. In order to do this, I ask permission of the Volksraad for as many members of the Triumvirate as the Government may think necessary to leave the country. Inasmuch as the British Government still rules the country until such time as self-government shall be restored, this meeting of the Volksraad is an extraordinary one, and I should not be doing my duty were I to lay before you any matters concerning the government of the land. In the meantime, I believe I am acting altogether in accordance with the treaty of peace, when I express in your presence the hope that all inhabitants of the Transvaal will in the meantine abstain from all words or deeds which could lead to the perpetuation of that feeling of hostility which must now and for ever be eradicated altogether. The people declared in 1879 what we repeated in our first proclamation—its desire to be a peaceable, obedient people, with a progressive government. Let all citizens offer and accept the hand of reconciliation in order to establish a happy state. I am of opinion that I can find no better means to get this understood everywhere and by every citizen than by calling you together, you who are the representatives of the people, and I trust that your Assembly will issue a notice to the people to that effect. When complete self-government has been granted, I shall lay before the honourable Volksraad in its first session a complete report of all that has been done by Government, as also the papers relating to matters the consideration of which was not completed in the session at Paarde Kraal. May Almighty God bless your deliberations!

'S. J. P. KRUGER.
'M. W. PRETORIUS.
'P. J. JOUBERT.
'W. EDWARD BOK, Secretary of State.'

I am informed by an Englishman who was present that there was after this speech a tendency to pass a resolution against any portion of the country being ceded to England. A remark to that effect by one member was loudly applauded, and thereupon Kruger suggested that the House should adjourn. This was agreed to. The point was then discussed outside. Afterwards the sitting was resumed, and no more was heard of the resolution. In the afternoon, at a large meeting of field cornets, commandants, and others, a memorial was drawn up addressed to the Triumvirate, containing the paragraph appended:—

'We having obtained information that the regulation of a portion of the labours has been left by the peace negotiations to a Royal Commission, and one condition is that the British Government, in promising restoration of our country, has reserved the right, in order to attain certain political objects, to declare a strip of ground, to the east of the 30th degree, British territory: whereas we are convinced such a division would be highly detrimental to our particular and general interests, we request your Honours, with the help of the Lord, to watch our rights, and make the Commission understand it would be unjust and dangerous for our peace and security, a violation of our honest rights, and having no tendency to restore confidence in the Imperial Government, our duty is to give you timely assurance that we cannot acquiesce in cutting off any territory or infringement upon our right: wherefore, with deepest humility, we invoke the blessing of the Lord upon your actions,' etc.

That the Triumvirate were still anxious to maintain secrecy as far as possible for the precise terms of their treaty with Sir Evelyn Wood, cannot be gainsaid. It was the one complaint that the members of the Volksraad privately expressed, and the answer of Bodenstein, the chairman of the Volksraad, to the speech of Kruger, 'With unutterable gratitude we hear from your Honours that peace and independence is about to be established, and we are prepared to receive further enlightenment from your Honours about the effected peace negotiations,' points to this conclusion.

Mr. Bok is of opinion that 'it would be dangerous' for England to take any part of the Transvaal; in fact, that war would immediately follow any decision of England to retain a portion. The Boers do not, however, set any value on the Gold Fields, and without much difficulty could perhaps be persuaded to let us take that district. As an instance of the indifference of the Boers to the precious metal, Mr. Bok told me that a Boer who had payable gold on his farm made him (Mr. Bok) take an oath that he would not divulge the fact for fear that diggers and others should be attracted to the spot and be a source of annoyance to the owner of the farm. The memorial above mentioned is to be laid before the Royal Commission. Before that tribunal will appear the President of the Transvaal, Messrs. Pretorius, Jorissen, T. de Montvilliers, J. H. Buskes, and others. For the present, the English Government will not levy any taxes, and has no right to enforce the payment of any arrears in the Transvaal; the only source of revenue at present is therefore from stamps, and the amount derived in that way will of course be very trifling. Asked as to whether the Boers would be willing to refund the money advanced by the British Government at the time of the annexation, Mr. Bok could hardly answer that. He seemed to think it improbable that such a stipulation would be amongst the decisions of the Royal Commission, and more improbable that the Republic would refund the amount, supposing a request were made for it. Having plainly put the question, 'Do you think that between the Boers and the Hollanders there is a sympathy and a fellow-feeling sufficiently strong to bind the two races together and let them work in union; or, in other words, granting that the Boers are not well enough educated to govern themselves, and that the assistance of the Hollander or German is necessary, do you not apprehend that a feeling of jealousy will arise in the Boer mind when they see Hollanders filling the chief positions in the Government?' Mr. Bok frankly replied that it was a matter in which naturally a great deal of prudence must be exercised. If prudence were exercised, he apprehended no such difficulty as that I had foreshadowed. That a Hollander could never be accepted as President he felt certain. He was sure that no one but a Dutchman, or an Africander at least, would ever be elected to the post. The Government would probably be carried on by a triumvirate. This is the executive, with of course the Volksraad or Parliament at its back. That the Free State and Cape Colony Boers would join in the next fight against the English (supposing there was one), Mr. Bok seemed fully convinced. He pointed out the significant fact that at the Nek there was one laager occupied by 1000 Free State volunteers. That Pretoria would be retained as the capital he thought probable, if the 'loyals' did not carry out their 'foolish threat' of leaving the place. The idea of the English taking the country east of the 30th parallel was out of the question altogether; it was the richest and most fertile part of the Transvaal, and the Boers would certainly never give it up. That the Kaffirs would be any serious source of danger to the Boers he did not believe, and he attached little credit to the information given that they were at that moment fully prepared to rise. Having mentioned to Mr. Bok the circumstance of the death of Messrs. de Woite and Van der Linden, and expressed the belief that Mr. de Woite was really shot by the Boer General for committing an offence against the South African Republic before the Republic was really in existence, Mr Bok assured me that I had been misinformed, because De Woite came to Heidelberg and took service under the Boer Government there, and during that time he supplied information to the English, and this was his offence, not that of communicating intelligence to the English authorities of what was transpiring at the Boer meeting at Paarde Kraal.

Sir Evelyn Wood, on his way down from Pretoria, had several interviews with the Boer leaders relative to the Potchefstrom affair. The result was that Joubert agreed to cancel the capitulation, deliver up the guns, and allow a re-entry of a garrison equal to that which had surrendered. His Excellency evidently had his doubts as to the desirability of sending a small body of troops to Potchefstrom through the Transvaal; the report was current that Cronje and the Potchefstrom men would certainly attack such a contingent. Meeting His Excellency at Newcastle, he asked me about the state of feeling there: 'If the people had not got their tails down.' I gave my opinion that the people assumed no such undignified attitude; that the loyals were indignant and rampant, and another outbreak of hostilities would certainly see more of the townspeople prepared to side openly with the British than on the last occasion.

Eventually a little parade was indulged in to compensate for England's outraged honour. Two Boer hostages were retained in Newcastle for a week, whilst a company of foot soldiers, escorted by a few Hussars, marched to Potchefstrom and marched back again, and the guns which had been hidden at a Dutch farm, no one knew where, appeared on the scene, and were delivered over to the garrison at Standerton.

On my road down I passed the Triumvirate journeying to Newcastle to attend the Commission; they were escorted by a number of Boers fully armed. Arms, however, were laid aside on reaching the border, and the attendants in part dispensed with. At Mount Prospect camp every one was getting heartily tired of the situation, and hoping only for an outbreak. Major Hart had carefully surveyed and measured every inch of Laing's Nek and the Majuba and ground around. In case of an outbreak of war our artillery fire would be no longer a matter of guess-work. Between Pretoria and Mount Prospect heliograph stations had been set up, and communication established by that means. An attempt to make good the telegraph line failed at the outset. As soon as the wire was carried over the Coldstream, a party of Boers, riding up to the workmen, threatened to shoot them if they did not desist, and the threat was effectual; the telegraph party returned to Newcastle, and refused to work unless protected. This circumstance probably gave rise to an alarm raised in the camp at Mount Prospect one night, that the Boers were advancing in numbers to seize the guns. Instantly sentries were doubled. Major Barrow's troop was communicated with, and every preparation made to guard against a surprise. The guns were drawn into the earthworks from the open, where they had been packed, and every one was on the alert, needlessly as it proved.

NEWCASTLE, *April* 26, 1881.

The sooner the business of the Royal Commission is disposed of, and its finding brought into effect, the better it will be for the Transvaal and its people, whether Dutchman, Hollander, or Englishman—the better it will be for those who, now refugees from that country, have interests in the territory; and the better it will be for those 'Britishers' who have not a cent's value in the land, or care one straw what flag it will be under or what its future condition will be. I say this irrespective of what the verdict of the Court of Inquiry and adjustment may be: whether its conclusions are accepted and abided by on the part of the Boers, or whether its judgment is rejected and defied by them; for at the present moment every one is in a state of suspense, and nothing is so likely to breed mistrust, nothing so calculated to promote ill feeling, as the uncertainty which hovers over the Royal Commission. Beyond one or two misdeeds on the one side or the other,—I will not say which,—there is really no great fact to try; no evidence can be produced to throw additional light on the question of the annexation of the Transvaal or its government by the British, which has not been before the world for a long time before the war broke out. The one question upon which alone there should be any controversy is, Who shall receive compensation for losses sustained during the war, and who is to pay it, if any? Why could not this one question have been made the sole object of the Commission, after the Imperial Government had answered the simple question—yea or nay the Transvaal belongs or does not belong to the Boers by right, and their full rights shall be accorded them? The Boers, as a last resource, have submitted their case to a court of arbitration, for as such they regard the Royal Commission; and a few of them hope great things from the arbitrators' award. The Boer leaders have done this, but the great mass of the Boers have not yet given their vote of confidence to the policy of their rulers. The Boer leaders were called into existence by votes of the people at a mass meeting, with the object of regaining the independence of the country by force of arms. The Boer leaders followed the instructions given them by the people, and the people, fighting hand in hand with them, were victorious, so far as the hostilities went. Peace was signed by the Boer leaders—vague, indefinite terms of peace were signed. The majority of the people returned to their homes fully convinced that they had accomplished the object with which they went out armed—the independence of their country, and above all, entire freedom from English rule. It is true the Volksraad met and passed a vote of confidence in the action of the Triumvirate; but to appreciate the value of that vote one must consider how that assembly was constituted. It was not the Volksraad of to-day, not elected by the voice of the Boer people, but the old Volksraad, which had died a natural death, and was galvanized and brought into life again by the wish of the Triumvirate and ex-members of that moribund organization. This act gave no doubt intense satisfaction to those who were once more called upon to exercise the functions of rulers. That must be beyond dispute, because 'the last thing that dies in a man is his vanity,' and that element is created in him at the moment of his birth. The question is, Will the people be content to accept this revived Parliament? Are the Transvaal Boers of to-day imbued with the same feelings and ideas as they were when they elected that Parliament? In constitutional history there is, I suppose, no parallel for such an act; but then we seem to have altogether left the age when any parallel can be sought for, unless we go back to that of Ananias and Sapphira. And because the people have no voice in this matter of the authority of the Volksraad; because the people have been deceived,—I don't say wilfully,—they are at the present not one whit the more at rest than they were three months ago; and nothing but the publication of the decision of the Royal Commission will dispel the very disagreeable and harmful uncertainty now prevalent. In Natal, people of course are disgusted with the bare idea of responsible government for the Boers. When Natalians have been told that they are too young, unsophisticated, weak, and ignorant to manage their own affairs, they must feel that it is a reflection on them if the Boer is considered so far in advance of them that he can govern himself. That the loyals in the Transvaal are discontented need not be noted; that Englishmen who have been worsted are dissatisfied is equally a truism. So it happens that every one one meets is a miserable man, and the misery will not cease, the wound cannot begin to heal, until the will of the great British nation is made known through the agency of the Royal Commission, and Boers and Englishmen know what is their relative position the one to the other. The present age of uncertainty will, I imagine, terminate sooner than most people think. The sittings of the Commission, it is true, have not commenced yet; but Sir Hercules Robinson now is the only person wanted to complete our triumvirate, and he cannot be far from Newcastle at this moment. On the principle that the greater quantity rules the lesser, I suppose the first business of the Commission will be to determine what portion, if any, of the Transvaal shall be retained by the British. That is the issue upon which everything depends, and it is a point which should not take long to determine, if the Boer leaders maintain their ground—that the whole of the country or none will be accepted by the people. If, while the Imperial Government professes that it wishes to have done with this troublesome and expensive people, and at the same time tries to and does retain a portion of the troublesome and expensive territory, when the Imperial Government will only be creating a thorn in the flesh, which will remain an abiding sore, until at some future day another war or another Royal Commission finally decides the question; because the Boers, flushed with their successes, are most certainly and decidedly not in a frame of mind, and will not be in a frame of mind, to accept as final any half-and-half principle: you may tell the Boer that our object in retaining part of the Transvaal is the outcome of our desire to protect the natives; that the people of England are so humane that they even pass laws to prevent the feelings of an animal being unnecessarily hurt; you may cite him as an instance in proof of our extreme tender-heartedness and beneficent compassion for all things living; but do not suppose that the Boer is altogether such a dolt as not to ask himself, Why then do not these English assume the protectorate of all the black tribes north of the Transvaal, who war with each other whenever they think fit, and may be warred against without intervention? The character of the British as the champion of the blacks will avail us nothing in the eyes of the Boers, however enthusiastically Exeter Hall missionary societies and others may cherish the idea. The Dutch farmers will be hard to convince, because they have only one simple end in view, to regain the whole of the Transvaal, and to be left to themselves to show the world if they cannot yet—even after a bad start—do all that their most ardent admirers claim they can perform. With the extensive functions the Royal Commission has allotted to it,—considering the demands of the Boers, their present singular position, and considering the fact that the Imperial Government, whilst suddenly anxious to be liberal, wishes to save as much as possible for itself,—the position of any one of the Commissioners cannot be an enviable one. I hope their task when completed will not be a thankless one, whether peace is the result or not. Evidently the native question is going to be our *pièce de resistance*; it is freely spoken of as such, and the eagerness with which evidence of Kaffir wrongs is treasured up is proof of the assertion. I believe Sir Henry de Villiers was much surprised when he learnt the immense number of individual claims for direct and indirect losses which have already been filed. £70,000 in direct losses alone represents as yet the proofs received from Pretoria. Amongst the more noticeable cases which I have seen affidavits drawn on, are these:—Swartboy, a native, had fifteen bags of corn and five wagon-loads of forage commandeered after Henning Pretorius had informed him that peace was proclaimed. Of £3000 worth of Government stores taken by the Boers from Mr. C. K. White the contractor's wagons, the Boers had a large quantity on hand at the time of the peace, but they have refused to give up any portion. Mr. White was the lessee of land at Pretoria from the Government. The conditions of his lease were, that for any mills or machinery erected by him on this land he should, on the expiration of the lease, receive compensation to the extent of the value of the buildings, etc., erected. He alleges that he has spent £7200 in such improvements, and that when he applied to the Government to know what security he would have for the fulfilment of the conditions of his lease, if the country was given back to the Boers, he was told that the Boer Government would of course take over the liabilities of the English Government. Mr. White is hardly satisfied with the prospect; he considers his security will diminish in value from the date of the restoration of the country to its former owners. Mr. Thomas B. Burnhams deposes that the Boers have taken £5977, 15s. 6d. worth of manufactured goods belonging to him in transit. Since the peace he has seen some of this property offered for sale in Boer stores, and has claimed its restoration to him, but this has been refused. Coulsan, Bibby, and Green want compensation to the amount of £700 for horses and plant taken. Green has a further claim for £1200 for furniture alone. I might give you twenty instances to show the varied nature of the claims, but the above are sufficient for the purpose. The inhabitants of Pretoria have notified Mr. Joubert that £65,000 worth of property is at his disposal if he will redeem the promise he is alleged to have made, that the Boer Government would 'buy out' any one who wished to realize and leave the country; and the intimation has also been made to him, that property representing a quarter of a million will readily be forthcoming if he desires it. To this representation no answer had been received up to the time my informant left the capital.

NEWCASTLE, *May* 7, 1881.

In the absence of news from Pretoria and the Transvaal, except that conveyed by the tongue of rumour, seeing the telegram from England of the nature of the reply given by Mr. Gladstone to Sir Michael Hicks Beach; seeing also that the sittings of what people call the Royal Commission have been suspended for a day or two; seeing also that there is a probability of troops being sent to Potchefstrom in place of those whose capitulation was obtained by dishonest means; and missing from this gay and festive town the familiar faces of Kruger, Joubert, and Pretorius, the inhabitants of Newcastle have drawn a sudden inference that peace negotiations have come to an end; that Joubert has gone to summon his men to the Nek; that in the course of a day or two all available troops here will move into a position to attack the enemy; and that we are going to fight it out to the bitter end.

As the result of inquiry made as to these alarming rumours, from headquarters I ascertained that things were going on as quietly and peaceably as could be expected; that the sittings of the Conference had been suspended to allow of the arrival of Sir Hercules Robinson; that the probability of our taking advantage of the decision of the Boer leaders, that the capitulation of Potchefstrom should be annulled, was not remote. From Dr. Jorissen, who was staying here, I learned that the absence of the Triumvirate was due only to their love of relaxation; that, in fact, one party had gone to visit the late battlefields in Natal; that another had gone down country a short distance to visit some friends. This information was repeated yesterday, the day on which the rumours of the previous day increased tenfold in volume.

To-day I find the alarmists are more busy than ever. Now it is that Joubert has gone with a troop of Hussars to Potchefstrom, to 'implore' the Boer authorities there to pull down the Republican flag from the court-house; that every Hussar, and Joubert himself, will be shot *en route*; that the Boers will not give up the guns; that Kruger and Pretorius have, for reasons best known to themselves (reasons only darkly hinted at here), trekked for the Transvaal: in a word, that there is to be a general conflagration; while Jorissen only stays here to spy out the land, and avert suspicion. 'As quietly as can be expected' is a somewhat wide phrase, seeing that the amount of quietude is dependent on an unknown quantity; but I think you may take it that matters, so far as the knowledge of the British authorities goes, have during the last three or four days by no means assumed the dire aspect that I have attempted to portray as the belief current in Newcastle, not only amongst civilians, but to no small extent in military circles. If there has arisen some corrosive element, what may it be? There can, up to the present, have arisen only one question, and that is the amount of reparation to be given for the Potchefstrom affair, over and above the reparation afforded by simply acknowledging that the capitulation shall be cancelled, that the guns must be returned, compensation given for the rifles taken, and a British force allowed to re-enter the fort. The larger questions as to boundary and Kaffir protection cannot have been gone into in the absence of the President and head of the Commission; and it is hardly likely that, having conceded so much as regards the Potchefstrom incident, the Boer leaders would force another war on the country by holding out over what at best cannot be regarded but as a trifle compared with the matters of far greater magnitude which have yet to be dealt with. Up to the present moment I do not believe that anything has arisen out of the Conference which has been held to imperil the chances of a settlement, although I would not like to say that hereafter there is no probability of a permanent disagreement on the points to be submitted to the conclave, whose decision may or may not meet with acceptance by the Dutch farmers.

Before the Commission will be called Mr. John Smith Moffat, who has large experience of the natives and their views, on the question of the Transvaal Kaffirs being brought under the influence of the Boers once more. Under the influence of the Boers the natives of the country undoubtedly will be brought, if the country, or any part of it, is handed over to the Government of the South African Republic. We may appoint ten thousand 'Residents' in the Transvaal, and yet this remark will hold good. As yet 'Residents' have to prove that they are of the slightest value in this world. They are a new and untried creation. I am not aware that one in Africa has been proved worth his salt, not because of any personal disabilities which attach to 'Residents,' but because their position entitles them to no higher rank than that of recognisable spies. Eyes and ears of the Government, in an unguarded moment they have been styled by a high authority, and the plain English of that is an 'informant,' if the word is less objectionable in this connection than the term 'recognised spy.' Regarded as a collector of grievances,—were it not for grievances his *raison d'être* would be gone,—a 'Resident' must always be a sore and a grievance to the Boers; and the presence of one in their midst, whose special vocation is that of representing to the English Government any infraction of what may be considered by the English Government the rights and privileges of the natives, will be a grievance of the highest order. The presence of a British Resident—not an ambassador, mind you—will mean to the Boers a standing vote of 'want of confidence' in their sense of justice; and if confidence does not exist between them and the neighbouring states, it cannot be said that much friendship exists between English and Boers. The Transvaal Boers will soon reason among themselves, Why should the Free State be free from 'Residents' and other restraints and influences of the British Government, while we are to be hampered in this way?

With the experience they have had of a Liberal Government undoing the policy of a Conservative Government, the Boers must regard with uneasiness the advent of a Conservative Government to office once more. In fact, there will be no end to suspicion and uneasiness on their part, and the advent of confidence on their side in the English is, to all appearances, in the far, far distance; so great is the distance, in fact, that the most imaginative brain cannot conjure up the spectacle. Beyond this there is the undoubted fact that the Transvaal Boers regard the natives in their employ and under their rule as inferior animals—not as human beings, even to the degree that Natalians and Cape colonists (who are often charged with default in this matter) esteem them; and is there any hope that the presence of a British Resident in the midst of the Boers will alter their convictions on this point, or have the slightest influence in alleviating the hardships, if any, that the Kaffirs suffer at the hands of the Boers? We talk of protecting the Kaffirs from the Dutchmen,—I don't know that the Kaffirs are not quite capable of protecting themselves,—but is it meant that we are to protect the Kaffirs outside or inside the new boundary of the Transvaal? When the new régime of protection is in working order, then we shall probably get at the truth of the question whether or not the Boers as a nation are hard and distasteful taskmasters to the Kaffirs—masters under whom the Kaffirs will not serve except by compulsion; because, the boundaries of the Republic being once defined, it will not be difficult for Kaffirs within it to fly and find a refuge outside the dominion of the Boers, if their lot is a severe one under the rule of the Republic.

Then, if all is true that has been alleged against the Boers, the Transvaal will speedily be denuded of its labour supply, and that is a contingency which must speedily upset the settlement now contemplated. Look at it whichever way you will, he must be an enthusiast of the most pronounced type who can foresee a satisfactory and easy path for the reinstated Republic under such conditions as the present policy of English Imperialism foreshadows.

Newcastle I found crowded with refugees from the Transvaal; they are squatting all over the town in canvas houses; and of all places in the world, Newcastle is perhaps at this moment the most disagreeable to live in, on account of the exaggerated and unfounded reports that pour out of every man's mouth about this wretched Transvaal affair. Newcastle is the hotbed of unfounded rumour. Previous to the arrival of Sir Hercules Robinson, Sir Evelyn Wood had several interviews with the Boer leaders respecting the Potchefstrom affair. It was not till the 8th of May that the President did reach Newcastle, and on the following day it was announced that the sitting of the Commission would be held privately. This gave great dissatisfaction, especially when it turned out that the Boer leaders, including Jorissen and Buskes (the famous gentleman from Potchefstrom), were allowed to be present. The representatives of the loyalists protested in vain; Sir Eveyln Wood was in favour of the proceedings being open, but his fellow-Commissioners were averse to it, and that settled the point.

The Triumvirate made themselves quite at home at the Plough Hotel in Newcastle. They had a separate table to themselves, and fared sumptuously; and I am glad to be able to say that, strong as was the hatred of many dining in the same room to these gentlemen, no sneer or insult was ever offered to them—not even to Mr. Buskes, who, amongst the Boer and Holland contingent, was the one man most likely to have been the recipient of uncomplimentary allusion.

NEWCASTLE, *May* 10, 1881.

Two days ago, Dr. Sketchley arrived from Potchefstrom. It will be remembered he was the civil surgeon who was in the fort at that place during the siege. I may add that he is a property holder in the Transvaal to some considerable amount, and, in common with other loyal Englishmen in that country, has suffered considerable loss at the hands of the Boers during the war. As a surgeon, he has seen service in the field, being present during the whole of the siege of Plevna, besides in other engagements, for which he has received several marks of distinction. His object in coming to Newcastle was to ascertain whether the English Government would be willing to compensate him and other Englishmen, of whom he is the representative, for their direct losses. Dr. Sketchley informs me he had an interview with Major Fraser, and at the outset warned him that anything that transpired during their conversation, he (Sketchley) reserved to himself the right to communicate to the press. Asking Major Fraser what compensation (if any) it was proposed to give Englishmen for their losses, Major Fraser replied, 'You will get compensation for household furniture destroyed or taken away, and for any other private property which is not applicable to the purposes of warfare. For other things, such as horses, cattle, oxen, sheep, cows, and wagons, which are useful in warfare, you will get no compensation.' Dr. Sketchley: 'That is somewhat remarkable. Do I understand you correctly? I can bring a man here who has lost £13,000 or £14,000 worth of horses, some of them imported breeding mares, for which he paid £800 or £900 a-piece. Will he get no compensation for this?

I myself have lost between thirty and forty brood mares, fifty-two cows and calves, and how can these be considered necessary to the Boers in warfare, as they have plenty of horses, and they have plenty of oxen, so they could not want any cattle for beef?' Major Fraser: 'Cows are useful for food, and for giving milk to the sick and wounded.' Dr. Sketchley: 'Looking at it in that light, it is so; but do you mean to say we shall receive no compensation for anything we have lost in that way—in the way of horses, cows, sheep, oxen, crops, or wagons, which you may say are useful for purposes of war?' Major Fraser: 'I don't think so, unless you apply to the Boer Government.' Dr. Sketchley: 'I have nothing to do with the Boer Government. I am a British subject, who paid taxes to the British Government after the country was annexed, and I look to the British Government to compensate me for losses through the action of the late rebels in the Transvaal; and I wish to tell you candidly that if I and others do not get the compensation we demand, we shall simply take it from the rebels ourselves. If it is legal for any party of rebels to come upon a man in an English colony under English laws—if it is legal for a set of bandits to come and take a man's property—it must be perfectly legal for that man to take any measures he likes to recover his property, if the state will not assist him or afford him compensation. That we mean to do in the Transvaal if the British Government refuse compensation. I don't wish to talk about what we are going to do, but I may mention this much—that, at the head of a commando, assisted by Kaffirs, we mean to take the law into our own hands, and see if we can compensate ourselves, if our claim to be treated as British citizens is denied. I have myself been through four campaigns, and have promised to me the help of many men who are capable of taking a lead in this matter.' Major Fraser: 'Well, all I wish you to remember is this: don't say that you have the sanction of the British Government for doing what you say you intend doing.'

As far as regards secrecy being maintained in the Royal Commission, any of the affidavits of private individuals are readily placed at the disposal of correspondents by Messrs. Cooper and Nixon, but the loyalists have adopted a practice of questionable value now. They rely on the 'native atrocity' and 'slavery' arguments—arguments which are as old as the hills, and, as regards slavery, as well founded as the hills. But what avails it to give evidence on these matters now-a-days? The Transvaal will be given up if every Boer in the land is proved a slavemaster to-day. There was a period in history when Englishmen knew something about the 'black ivory' trade. Suppose France were now about to make a concession to England of some possession, how could it affect the transaction to rake up the past history of England's traffic in slaves? If the evidence now being poured in on this point only related to practices of the years 1880 or 1879, even then it would not be of much value, except to prove that, whilst professing to govern the Transvaal honestly, the English Government permitted wrong-doing—or, to put it in the mildest possible form, was ignorant of what was being practised by her subjects. The loyalists assert positively, that since the annexation the Boers had enslaved the Kaffirs. Let me give an example or two of the affidavits I have seen.

A missionary deposes: 'I have been for a number of years residing in Leydenburg. Thirteen years ago I noticed slaves brought in there from Zoutpansberg. They were spoken of by the Boers as being "black ivory." It was a matter of notoriety that Pretorius was one of the greatest dealers. Mr. Richardson, the Church of England clergyman, protested at the Landdrost's office against the wholesale trade in slaves that was carried on. Mr. Rudolph, the Wesleyan minister, also protested in the strongest terms against the cruelties practised on slaves. At the close of the first campaign against Secocoeni, Mr. Burgers visited Leydenburg, and shortly after several raids were made by several parties against natives living in the opposite direction to Secocoeni country. One of those parties was led by Abel Erasmus, one of the Boer Commandants of the district during the recent war. He returned with a wagon-load of women and children, which he brought to Leydenburg for disposal. Mr. Cooper, the then Landdrost, interfered, but Erasmus contended it was legal, as Burgers had authorized it, and he had told the Boers they could keep all they captured. Finally, however, the women were returned to their kraals. Shortly after this Cooper was dismissed from his office, and Mr. Roth was appointed in his stead. The chief Shatane shortly after this made a complaint to the authorities that Erasmus, with a party of Boers, had come to his kraal and asked for some of his men to go on commando. To this Shatane agreed, but the Boers on the following day sent the Kaffirs home, saying they also were going home.

The Kaffirs dispersed accordingly, but the Boers, returning to Shatane's kraal, surrounded it, fired upon two or three old men there, killing them, and upon those who attempted to escape. Then they took away as prisoners as many of the women and children as they could. The Rev. Dr. Nachtigal, of the Berlin Missionary Society (continues deponent), was the interpreter for Shatane's people, and he told me at the close of the interview at which Shatane made complaint about this affair. When I expressed my surprise, he produced a copy of a register of men, women, and children, to the number of 480, kept in the Landdrost's office, who had been disposed of by one Boer to another for a consideration. Nachtigal would not let me use the document, as if he did so his life would be in jeopardy; eventually, however, he gave me permission to forward it to Lord Carnarvon, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, through the Governor of the Cape. In consequence of the outcry about slavery, a commission sat in Leydenburg, professing to be appointed by Mr. Burgers; but the Commissioner has refused to produce any credentials. When Nachtigal and I were summoned to give evidence, we refused, because the Court had no authority, and there would be no protection for ourselves or any natives who might appear before it. Nachtigal also declared that he had placed sufficient evidence in the hands of Mr. Burgers, but no notice had been taken of it. Burgers had written to all the missionaries, asking them to prove any case they knew, and Nachtigal, in answer to that, sent Mr. Burgers a copy of the register before mentioned. Notwithstanding this, Burgers wrote to the Governor of the Cape, saying that there was no proof of slavery in the Transvaal. Nachtigal also authorized Lord Carnarvon to get his journal from Berlin, in which many cases of slavery were reported. We applied to Sir Theophilus Shepstone to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter of slavery in the Transvaal, but he replied that "the subject had better be allowed to drop for the present." It is within the knowledge of most people who have been in the Transvaal any time, that the majority of the servants of the Boer farmers have been captured, or are the children of slaves. Immediately prior to the annexation, many cases of cruelty and treachery came to my notice. In 1879 two natives (prisoners) were shot at Spekboom River while under the charge of Abel Erasmus and others. The affair caused no surprise; it was a matter of common knowledge that the Boers shot their prisoners. About the same time a native woman died while tied at night up to the flogging post at Kruger's Post. About the same time a native was chased by a young Boer up the Crocodile River and shot. For none of these offences were the guilty punished. Since the annexation, I know a native woman named Griet who complained that her child was unlawfully held in slavery in the service of a farmer named Kruger, who for some time was the Landdrost of Leydenburg. I know that during the late war the natives were not only heavily commandeered, but forced to work on farms without payment, and they were also in many instances cruelly treated. Lanky Boy, the native chief, has said openly, "The English may make peace, but we will not." I know that Marthinus Schoeman, a Boer, accompanied Scholefield, Government officer, to Mapoch's place to assure that chief that the war was over, as he would not believe that such was the case. My belief is that the Kaffirs will commence a war of extermination against the Boers, if the country is given over to the Boers. On the 20th of April last, I noticed a Kaffir girl in Leydenburg crying, and she said she had been beaten by a Boer who was visiting the town, and she showed the welts made on her back. A young Boer standing by confirmed this. He said he was the son of the man who had beaten her, because she had frequently run away from his service.'

Evidence was also sedulously collected by emissaries of the loyalist deputation, to prove that the retrocession of the Transvaal must be attended with disaster to Englishmen, loyal Boers, and natives; affidavits also were prepared in proof of the charge that the Boers during the war had incited native chiefs to rebel against our authority. Take, for instance, the following summaries of such documents:—

Reiner Johannes Van der Linden, a Boer of the Zeerust district, deposed that he was commandeered after the war to go against Montsiewe, the Bechuana chief. He adds, if the English do not protect the loyal Boers in Marico against the Republican Boers, most of them will have to quit the Transvaal.

Amatonga, son of Umpanda (father of Cetewayo), deposes that when the war broke out, Andries Laas asked him to join the Boers. He refused, and they threatened to shoot him. He fled with twenty of his men to Wakkerstroom. Andries Laas was at the head of 400 natives belonging to Sturman, Jantze Romiland, and one of Langalibalele's sub-chiefs, who fought against the English at Wakkerstroom. They were promised all the booty to be got. Since the peace the Boers have told Amatonga's people that they will shoot him.

Joseph George Pullen saith on oath he went towards Middleburg to take possession of his house after peace was signed, but he was informed by his father that his life would not be safe. He entered the place, and a neighbour informed him that two Boers were going about to shoot him; consequently, in fear of his life, he had to return to Newcastle.

Daniel Harpy, Jan Pampoen, Rooibuck, and Wilhelm, petty chiefs from Saltpan, Pretoria district, have sworn affidavits before the Commission as to slavery practised by Boers.

To cut a long story short, I need only point out that such evidence as this, prepared in Newcastle, would have been poured into the Commissioners' ears until doomsday had a deaf ear not been turned to it after a time. That the work had to be done swiftly became evident when the following notice was issued :—

'*18th May* 1881.

'The Transvaal Royal Commissioners give notice hereby, that excepting cases where claims have been or may be settled by amicable adjustment, the Commission is prepared to consider all claims for compensation for damages or other proceedings on either side, so far as in the judgment of the Commission such acts were not justified by the necessities of war, and are fairly subject for compensation.

'The Royal Commission desires that all claimants for compensation shall send their claims to the Secretary of the Commission, if they have not already done so, and shall arrange that these claims are received by him not later than the 1st of July next. The Commission will be unable to consider any claims after that date.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION—ITS FUNCTIONS AND POWERS—MR. GLADSTONE AND THE MALCONTENTS.

THAT the Royal Commissioners had little or no discretion allowed them in dealing with any but matters of smallest detail, became evident from the first. Every question had to be referred to the Colonial Office. Sir Hercules Robinson, Sir Evelyn Wood, and Sir Henry de Villiers were the voice, and nothing more, of that Office; it was a Royal Commission of inquiry in name only. The Boers threatened to renew the war if the country east of the 30th degree were retained, and the Colonial Office abandoned that position at once. I believe if the Boers had only shown a bolder front, and that fickle master of statesmen—public opinion—in England had not shown a tendency to veer round, the Dutch would have gained every point they contended for.

How much the Boer leaders admired England's 'noble and magnanimous love of right and justice' on the 24th May, before the intention of the Royal Commission was divulged to them, is shown in the following copy of an address of the Dutch leaders to Sir Evelyn Wood :—

'MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—We the undersigned representatives of the people of the Transvaal, herewith beg to tender our most hearty congratulations to your Excellency as the representative of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, on this anniversary of Her Majesty's birthday.

'A short time ago we had occasion publicly to state that our respect for Her Majesty the Queen of England, for the Government of Her Majesty, and for the British nation, had never been greater than now, that we are enabled by the peace agreement to produce proof of England's *noble and magnanimous love of right and justice.*

'And we beg *now to reiterate those sentiments*, and to add, that we are convinced that the relations which will for the future exist between the Crown of England and the people of the Transvaal will be the best guarantee of a sincere and everlasting peace.

'We are thankful that your Excellency has afforded us the opportunity of expressing our sincere desire to maintain the most friendly relations with Her Majesty's Government.

'We respectfully request that your Excellency may be pleased to convey to Her Majesty our deepest respect, and the assurance that our prayers are that the Almighty God may shower His blessings upon Her Majesty for many years, for the welfare and prosperity of Great Britain and the whole of South Africa, and more especially of the Transvaal, who hails and respects Her Majesty as her future Suzerain.—We have the honour to be, your Excellency's most obedient servants,

'S. J. P. KRUGER, Vice-President.
'M. W. PRETORIUS, Member of Triumvirate.
'J. JOUBERT, S.C.
'ED. J. JORISSEN.
'T. DE VILLIERS.
'G. H. BUSKES.'

The admiration for Her Majesty's Government was soon blunted when they discovered that they were not to have everything settled all their own way: point after point discussed in the Commission room only brought deeper discontent to the minds of the Triumvirate.

Take the text of the instructions of Lord Kimberley to the President of the Commission, and particularly the last significant paragraph, and it will be seen that the whole tenor of the document is: 'Make the best you can out of the business by the aid of your local knowledge, and Her Majesty's Government will, as occasion requires, settle any point in dispute.' I believe if the Royal Commission had been authorized to act on its own judgment, the Convention, which has disgusted every Boer in the Transvaal, would have been one that would have given general satisfaction. The instructions to Sir Hercules Robinson may find a place here:—

'DOWNING STREET, 31*st March* 1881.

'THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY TO SIR HERCULES ROBINSON, G.C.M.G.

'SIR,—You have received from Sir Evelyn Wood a statement of the conditions agreed upon between him and the leaders of the Transvaal Boers on the 31st March, and I have now the honour to acquaint you that the Queen has approved of the appointment of yourself, Sir Evelyn Wood, and Sir Henry de Villiers, to be Her Majesty's Commissioners for considering and advising upon the final arrangements for the settlement of the affairs of the Transvaal.

'I shall transmit to you a Commission under the Queen's sign-manual and signet for the appointment of the Commissioners; but as the first duties of the Commissioners will be those of inquiry and discussion, and some time must elapse before any formal action on their part will be required, the Commission will have been able to enter without delay upon the consideration of the matters referred to it. You will preside at the meeting of the Commission, and in your absence Sir Evelyn Wood has precedence of Sir Henry de Villiers.

'I have communicated to President Brand by telegraph the hope of Her Majesty's Government that he will be able to be present, as representing a friendly State, at the proceedings of the Royal Commission, and I understand that he proposes to apply to the Volksraad for the leave necessary to enable him to go beyond the Free State for that purpose.

'It has been agreed that the Commissioners should meet such representatives as the Boers may select to express their views, and should fully discuss with them the questions which have to be settled.

'The Commissioners will make such arrangements for the time and place of their meetings as may be most convenient to all parties.

'It may be desirable that the Commission should in the first instance address itself to the principal points referred to in the general terms of settlement agreed to by Sir Evelyn Wood with the Boer leaders, a summary of which is contained in his telegram to me of the 21st March, and to some extent further explained in subsequent telegraphic correspondence. I may recapitulate them briefly, as follows:—

'The Transvaal State is to enjoy complete self-government under the suzerainty of the Queen; the control of its relations with Foreign Powers being reserved to the British Government.

'A British Resident may be appointed at the capital of the Transvaal State, with such functions as Her Majesty's Government may determine on the recommendation of the Commission.

'The Commission is to consider provisions for the protection of Native interests.

'The Commission is further to consider whether any portion, within certain limits, mentioned in my telegram to Sir Evelyn Wood of March 17, should be severed from the country now included in the Transvaal Province.

'There is to be no molestation for political opinion either way, and a complete amnesty is to be accorded to all who have taken part in the present war, excepting only persons who have committed or are directly responsible for acts contrary to the rules of civilised warfare.

'Immunity from civil process is guaranteed to the Boer leaders individually and collectively for acts done in reference to the war until self-government is accorded, and the question of compensation to either side for acts not justified by necessities of war is remitted to the Commission to judge what acts were justified.

'Besides these principal points there are some other matters referred to in the agreement entered into by Sir Evelyn Wood, as reported in his telegram to me, and there are further points not mentioned by him which will have to be provided for in the final settlement. Of the latter, the most important are the determination of a boundary line in the territory known as the Keate Award, the payment of the public debt of the province, and the recognition of all lawful acts done by the Government during the British occupation. I will deal in order with the various points to which I have referred.

'Entire freedom of action will be accorded to the Transvaal Government so far as is not inconsistent with the rights expressly reserved to the Suzerain Power. The term Suzerainty has been chosen as most conveniently describing superiority over a State possessing independent rights of government subject to reservations with reference to specified matters.

'The most material of these reserved rights is the control of the external relations of the future Transvaal State, which will be vested in the British Government, including, of course, the conclusion of treaties and the conduct of diplomatic intercourse with Foreign Powers.

'As regards communications with Foreign Governments, it will probably be found most convenient that the Transvaal Government should correspond on such matters with Her Majesty's Government through the Resident and the High Commissioner.

'There remains for consideration under this head the manner in which the relations with the independent native tribes beyond the frontier should be conducted. The general superintendence of these relations would seem naturally to fall within the functions of the British Resident under the direction of the High Commissioner. It will be for the Royal Commissioners, after examination of the whole question, to recommend what should be the precise limits of the powers assigned to the Resident in regard to this important matter. You will bear in mind that the objects to be aimed at are to preserve the peace of the frontier and to maintain a course of policy conducive generally to the interests and tranquillity of the whole of South Africa, and that Her Majesty's Government have no desire to interfere with the local administration beyond what may be indispensable for the furtherance of these objects.

'A still more difficult question will be to determine what provisions shall be made for the protection of the interests of the natives who dwell within the present territorial limits of the Transvaal. The districts vary greatly in circumstances, but they may be divided into three categories:—

'1. Districts which have been really occupied by white settlement, such as Pretoria, Heidelberg, Middleburg, and Potchefstrom, where the white settlers are not much outnumbered by the natives, and where the authority of the Republican Government was thoroughly established before the annexation.

'2. Districts like Leydenburg, where the white settlements are surrounded by native tribes vastly preponderating in numbers, which either refused to recognise the rule of the Boers, or gave it but imperfect obedience. In the northern part of this district is Secocoeni's tribe, which we found at war with the Boers, and practically independent, and which was reduced to submission by the operations of Sir Garnet Wolseley.

'3. Such districts as Zoutpansberg, where the native population is estimated at nearly 365,000 souls, whilst the white settlers are said to number only about 800, and where the authority of the Republic was at the time of the annexation scarcely acknowledged. It is true the Boers laid claim to the country, and formerly held possession of parts of it; but they had been gradually pushed back by the natives, who had virtually regained their independence. The difficulty of dealing satisfactorily with the districts in the two last categories led Her Majesty's Government to think that it might be found expedient to sever from the Transvaal the eastern portion of the territory now comprised within its limits, taking the Vaal River and a line drawn from the Vaal northward near the 30th degree of longitude as the new boundary. This would, however, include a part of the district of Middleburg, and it will be probably sufficient to consider the suggestions as limited to the severance of the district of Wakkerstroom, Utrecht, Leydenburg, and Zoutpansberg. The district of Waterberg resembles that of Zoutpansberg in the vast numerical superiority of the natives, but its position is such that it could not form a part of a separate British province, and as far as I am aware the natives had not driven back the Boer settlers in the same way as in Zoutpansberg. I will, however, refer to this district further on in connection with Zoutpansberg.

'To deal first with the Wakkerstroom and Utrecht districts.

'There would be one obvious advantage in retaining these districts under British rule, inasmuch as they would separate the Transvaal State from Zululand, and prevent the recurrence of those dangerous border disputes between the Boers and the Zulus which were in large measure the cause of the Zulu war. Moreover, the existence of another authority on the Zulu border would render it extremely difficult for the British Government to maintain that influence with the Zulu chiefs which is essential for the maintenance of peace in Zululand, and for the success of the settlement of that country made by Sir Garnet Wolseley.

'The same reasons apply to that part of Leydenburg known as New Scotland, by retaining which as British, the Swazies would in great measure be kept apart from the Boer frontier. If strong objections were raised on the part of the Boers in the severance from the Transvaal of the whole of Wakkerstroom, so much only might be retained as would be necessary to maintain the communications between Natal and the British territory farther northward, but the Vaal River would form the most natural and convenient boundary.

'With regard to the Leydenburg district, apart from New Scotland, the arguments in favour of maintaining British rule over it are that the population is stated to contain an increasing British element principally at the Gold Fields, that the native population vastly outnumber the white inhabitants, being estimated at 123,300 as compared with 1858, and that having subdued Secocoeni's tribe, which occupies an important part of the district, we are under peculiar obligations to make provision for its fair treatment.

'On the other hand, the Leydenburg district could scarcely be annexed to Natal, and as a separate British province it would form an inconvenient narrow strip of territory, which would probably for some time to come not pay its own expenses. Lastly, Her Majesty's Government are averse, on general grounds of policy, to the extension of British territory in South Africa.

'A most important consideration will be the wishes of the settlers themselves, and you will be careful to ascertain in the fullest manner whether they would willingly accept the continuance of British rule, if it should be determined to retain any of the territory to which I have referred.

'If Secocoeni's country is not retained under British rule, or declared to be an independent native district, it might be advisable that some special conditions should be made as to its relations with the Transvaal State; and should it be ultimately decided that no territory should intervene between the Transvaal State and Zululand or Swaziland, it will be necessary that the Transvaal Government should distinctly recognise the boundaries of Zululand and Swaziland as lately defined, and the independence of the latter, over whom the Republic appears to have claimed an undefined supremacy before the annexation, though it was not acknowledged by the Swazies.

'I now pass to Zoutpansberg. I incline to the opinion that the most satisfactory arrangement as to this district would be that it should be left to the native tribes.

'I should be glad if some similar arrangement could have been made as to Waterberg; but the reasons for leaving the district to the native tribes do not appear to be so strong as in the case of Zoutpansberg, and as the Boers have been informed that it was not the intention of Her Majesty's Government that territory should be severed from the Transvaal west of the 30th degree of longitude, the question does not stand on the same footing.

'It should be remembered, however, that the severance of the districts principally inhabited by natives would have the effect of lessening the necessity for interference for the protection of the natives within the territories of the Transvaal State, and such a measure might therefore recommend itself to the Boers as diminishing the occasions for action on the part of the British Government with regard to their interior affairs. It is on every account desirable that interference in those affairs should be confined to the fewest possible points, and those points should be clearly defined and embodied in the final settlement amongst the conditions upon which the government of the country is handed over. The subject is one especially requiring examination on the spot; but I may mention one or two points as indicating the nature of the provisions which might be made, as, for example, the stipulations that no law should be enacted forbidding the natives to hold land, and that they should be allowed to move as freely within the country as may be consistent with the requirements of public order, and to leave it for the purpose of seeking employment elsewhere.

'The provision in the Sand River Convention against slavery, in any form, must of course be reaffirmed. Perhaps on some matters of special importance affecting the natives, it might be provided that the Suzerain Power should have a vote upon any new legislation. Whatever provisions are made, it would be one of the duties of the British Resident to report to the High Commissioner as to their working and observance.

'It is scarcely to be hoped that political passions will immediately calm down, and Her Majesty's Government are bound to take care that those who have been faithful to the British cause during the late war shall not suffer any detriment in consequence of their loyalty. Her Majesty's Government have agreed to a complete amnesty to those who have taken part with the Boers, and the Boers on their side have engaged that no one shall suffer molestation on account of his political opinions. It will be your duty to lay down full and explicit conditions for securing to those who have been loyal to Her Majesty, whether of English or Dutch origin, full liberty to reside in the country, with enjoyment of all civil rights, and protection for their persons and property.

'You will make every effort to bring to justice those who are accused of the murder of Captain Elliott and Mr. Barber, or of any similar acts; and you will call on the Boer leaders, in accordance with their engagement to Sir Evelyn Wood, to afford you their assistance in tracing out and arresting the offenders.

'Having thus gone through the principal points arising out of the agreement between Sir Evelyn Wood and the Boers, I will proceed to notice the other matters to which I have referred.

'You will find the question of the territory known as the "Keate Award" somewhat fully discussed in my despatch of the 27th May last to the late Sir George Pomeroy Colley. It was my intention, on receiving his report, to instruct him to determine such a new line of boundary as might in present circumstances appear to be the fairest to all parties, and best calculated to preserve the peace on the western frontier of the Transvaal. Sir George Colley had, unfortunately, not made any official report of the result of his visit to this territory, but I have reason to believe that he was of opinion that it was out of the question now to maintain the line laid down in 1871 by Lieutenant-Governor Keate, and that he would have recommended a new line, leaving a considerable part of the territory to the Transvaal. It will be for you to consider what line should be adopted, and you will, I have no doubt, derive valuable information and assistance from Lieutenant-Colonel Moysey, R.E., the Special Commissioner in the Keate Award district. It may be found desirable to annex some part of this territory to Griqualand West or to the Orange Free State, but this must depend upon considerations which I am unable from want of local knowledge fully to appreciate. I will only add that this border has been so long in an unsettled condition, that it is urgently necessary that the frontier line should be definitely fixed with as little delay as possible.

'On reference to the constitution of the former South African Republic, I find there are articles which appear to infringe upon the principle of religious toleration. I am not aware that any actual impediment was placed by the State in the way of the free exercise of their religion by persons not belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church; but to prevent any misconception on the point, it will be well to provide for the unrestricted exercise of their religion by all denominations within the future Transvaal State.

'The Commission will have to consider the arrangements to be made for the assumption by the Transvaal State of the debt incurred in connection with the administration of the affairs of the country, whether by the South African Republic before the annexation or by the Provincial Government subsequently. I may refer you on this point to the declaration made by the Boer leaders in their proclamation of the 16th December last, that the "lawful expenditure lawfully incurred for the necessary expenses of the country by the intermediate Government will be acknowledged."

'There will also be other financial arrangements to be considered in connection with the transfer of responsibilities and liabilities to the future Transvaal State, including such provision as is usually made on these occasions for compensating any permanent officers displaced by the change of Government.

'I need scarcely say that it will be expected that full security for the continued enjoyment of their right shall be guaranteed to all holders of property in the Transvaal, after the establishment of the new Government. I cannot doubt that the necessary undertaking will be readily given, and it will be for the Commission to consider and recommend the terms in which such undertaking should be framed. Provisions will also be required for securing to British subjects complete freedom of trade to and through the Transvaal, on the same footing as citizens of the Transvaal State. I shall transmit to you a copy of a treaty now in force, which will be of use to the Commission in considering the stipulations to be entered into on this subject.

'With regard to the formal style and designation of the future Transvaal State, I am disposed to think that, instead of reviving the name "South African Republic" (which never was appropriate, having regard to the fact that there are two Republics in South Africa), it would be preferable to adopt the name "Transvaal State." Before the annexation the country was very commonly spoken of as the Transvaal, and it would be convenient, as in the case of the Orange Free State, to describe it by the river which forms its southern boundary.

'I shall from time to time address to you instructions upon any further points which may arise.—I have, etc.,

'KIMBERLEY.'

How little hope there was for success attending the efforts of the English residents in the Transvaal, who protested and memorialized the Home Government against the retrocession of the country, was speedily set at rest by the letters of Mr. Gladstone and the debate on the policy of the Government in the House of Commons. By a singular error in Reuter's telegram, the majority for the Government was set down as eleven or twelve, and this news caused the greatest excitement in the Transvaal and Natal: the following day saw the error rectified, and 'all hope gone.' I append the correspondence between the Loyalists and the Prime Minister, with copies of other documents bearing on the protestants' fruitless labours:—

THE PROTEST TO EARL KIMBERLEY.

'TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY, HER MAJESTY'S SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES.

'MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LORDSHIP,—We, the undersigned residents in the Transvaal, beg most humbly to protest against the withdrawal of the British Government from that country, for the following reasons:—

'1st. Because at the time of the annexation the country was in a state of hopeless bankruptcy, the value of property was rapidly depreciating, and the country was in extreme danger from the adjacent native tribes, with some of whom the Republican Government was at war, and which it had proved itself utterly unable to subdue. There is also strong evidence to show that, had the country not been annexed, it would have been laid waste by these native tribes.

'2nd. Because, notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, we are convinced that at the time of the annexation the majority of the inhabitants were in favour of the country being placed under British Government on account of the difficulties the Republican Government had to encounter, as evidence of which we draw attention to the hearty welcome accorded to the 13th Regiment on entering the country, the reports of Sir Theo. Shepstone, and the various meetings held in different parts of the country.

'3rd. Because at the time of the annexation many Boers and other inhabitants of the Transvaal would have left the country had it remained under the Boer Government, fearing an invasion from the Zulu and other native tribes.

'4th. Because, relying on the guarantees given by the Right Honourables the Earl of Beaconsfield, Earl of Carnarvon, and Sir M. Hicks Beach, M.P., and Her Majesty's High Commissioner, Sir Garnet Wolseley, and, more recently, those of the Right Honourables W. E. Gladstone and the Earl of Kimberley, that the annexation was irrevocable, property has largely increased in value, and much capital has been invested in landed and other kinds of property, including the introduction of machinery, much of which will be lost if the Boer Government is restored, as loyal subjects of England cannot submit to Boer rule, and will have no option but to renounce their allegiance to England or abandon their property.

'5th. Because from 600,000 to 800,000 natives resident in the Transvaal look to the British Government for that protection which it will be unable to give them if a Boer Government is established in the Transvaal.

'6th. Because the prestige of the British army and nation has been tarnished by three successive defeats, and, unless the supremacy of England be vindicated, inhabitants of British descent living in South Africa will be subjected to continual insult and injury, not only from Boers, but also from native tribes who have witnessed our defeat and humiliation.

'7th. Because, under the Boer Government, owing to the weakness of the Executive, there was an utter disregard of the law, and great disrespect shown to it in the persons of the magistrates; and we have no reason to believe that the case would be altered under any new Boer Government, nor do we think that a British Resident would be able, however willing he might be, to protect the rights of British residents.

'For these reasons, therefore, we deem it our duty, humbly but strongly, to protest against the withdrawal of the British Government from the Transvaal.

'And, as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray, etc.

'JAMES C. MURRAY,' and thirty-four others.

LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER (COVERING PETITION TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS).

'PETITION OF LOYAL INHABITANTS OF THE TRANSVAAL.

'PRETORIA, TRANSVAAL, SOUTH AFRICA, *May* 1, 1881.

'SIR,—I have the honour to enclose a printed copy of the petition of the Loyal Inhabitants of the Transvaal, which has been prepared by the Central Committee, sitting at this place, and which is intended to be presented to the House of Commons in due course.

'The Committee desire me to express the hope that you will be able to support the prayer of the petition, and thus endeavour to see justice and right done to the loyal subjects of the British Crown, who have lost friends and property in defence of the honour of their country, apparently without hope of redress or consideration.

'The Committee also desire to point out that, although the petition is not signed by any natives, they have felt it their duty to take up their case also, inasmuch as they do not understand properly how to bring their own position before the British nation. The Committee are in communication with several native chiefs within the borders who have been sufferers under Boer rule in bygone days, and who express their wish that the English should know that they will never endure to be tyrannized over by Boers again; and they are also in possession of information leading them to believe that there will be a general rising of the natives round the borders when British authority is withdrawn, especially on the western borders, which were for years the districts from which the Boers drew their principal supply of domestic slaves.

'A deputation will shortly leave for England, and the committee will be deeply obliged if you will give them the aid of your public countenance and support, so as to prevent the public at home from being unwittingly led into doing a great and grievous wrong to the interests of humanity and justice in South Africa.—I have, etc.,

'C. K. White,
'President of the Committee of Loyal Inhabitants.

'To the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.'

THE PETITION TO THE COMMONS.

'To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled,

'The Humble Petition of the Loyal Inhabitants of the Transvaal showeth, That the country, now known as the Transvaal, was forcibly taken possession of, in or about the year 1836, by emigrant Boers from the Cape Colony, who were at the time British subjects.

'That the natives, to whom the country then belonged, were either driven out of the country, or reduced to a state of subjection or servitude.

'That by the Sand River Convention in 1852, the emigrants were permitted by the British Government to establish themselves as an independent Republic, subject to certain conditions.

'That from the year 1852 up to the year 1877, the country remained subject to a Boer Republican Government, when the British Government exercised its dormant authority, and annexed it to England.

'That in the proclamation announcing the annexation, it was stated that, instead of the Republic having become a flourishing and self-sustaining State, a source of strength and security to neighbouring European communities, and a point from which civilisation would spread to Central Africa, as it was hoped it might, the Government of the country had been defeated in an attempt to compel Secocoeni, a Kaffir chief, to obedience, and was in imminent danger of an inroad by Cetewayo, the powerful king of the Zulus, and had even been compelled to abandon part of its territory to the natives, and was powerless to vindicate its assumed rights, or to resist the declension that was threatening its existence; that all confidence in its stability had been withdrawn; that commerce was well-nigh destroyed, and that the country was in a state of bankruptcy; that the white inhabitants were divided into factions; that the Government had fallen into helpless paralysis from causes it had been, and was, unable to control or counteract; and that the prospect of the election of a new President, then impending, was looked forward to by all parties as most likely to result in civil war, with its attendant anarchy and bloodshed.

'That among other reasons justifying the annexation, but not referred to in the proclamation, may be mentioned the cruel treatment of the natives by the Boers, and the prevalence of slavery, disguised under the name of apprenticeship, but which was in force, notwithstanding the Sand River Convention, as may be seen by reference to the works of the late Dr. Livingstone, F. W. Chesson, and others, and by the report of a Commission of inquiry made to the Boer Volksraad or Parliament in the year 1867.

'That your petitioners believe that the annexation was acquiesced in by a majority of the inhabitants, and was looked upon as an act calculated to create confidence and credit in the country, a belief which is borne out by the fact that almost all the old officials appointed by the former Government, or elected by the people, remained in office under the new Government; and your petitioners further believe, that if the promises expressed and implied in the annexation proclamation had been carried out fully in the spirit of the proclamation, the whole of the inhabitants would, in time, have become loyal subjects of Her Majesty.

'That the annexation was followed by an immediate accession of confidence, and it marked the commencement of an era of progress and advancement, which has steadily increased up to the present time, despite the numerous drawbacks and disadvantages to which the country has been subjected, and some of which have been the result of Imperial action.

'That, notwithstanding the promises expressed and implied in the annexation proclamation, the country has been governed as a Crown colony, and no opportunity has been afforded to the inhabitants of controlling the policy which has regulated its administration, and your petitioners are in no way responsible for the late lamentable war, or for the disgraceful peace which has concluded it.

'That, on repeated occasions since the annexation, successive governors of the Transvaal have given pledges, by proclamation and by word of mouth, that the country would remain British territory, and would not be restored to the Boers; and that in particular, by a proclamation dated October 7, 1879, Sir Garnet Wolseley stated that, in order to remove any doubt as to the maintenance of British authority, he made it known that the Transvaal would continue to be an integral portion of Her Majesty's dominions, and on more than one occasion he stated that the Transvaal would remain British territory as long as the sun shone.

'That Mr. Gladstone, who was then Prime Minister of England, stated in reply to a memorial addressed to him by the loyal inhabitants of Pretoria, about May 1880, that he had already informed the Boer representatives, who had addressed him, that the annexation could not be rescinded, endorsing the pledges and declared policy of Earl Beaconsfield, his predecessor in office; and that Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in a telegram to Sir Owen Lanyon, the Administrator of the Province, and in order to allay doubts which had arisen in consequence of the continued agitation of the Boers, said that under no circumstances could Her Majesty's dominion over the Transvaal be relinquished.

'That, inasmuch as Her Majesty's Government exercised the supreme control of the affairs of the province, and were cognisant of the whole question in all its bearings from the commencement, including the position taken by Boer agitators during the later part of the period in question, and that they had, notwithstanding, declared so repeatedly and in such unmistakeable terms that the annexation would never be rescinded, and especially so lately as last year, your petitioners were justified in concluding that the British nation had irrevocably, and after the utmost deliberation, determined that under *all* circumstances the Transvaal should remain under British rule.

'That, firmly relying upon these solemn pledges, and confiding in the steadfastness of purpose and fidelity to obligations which have, up to the time of the present ill-advised treaty, made the name of England respected by civilised and savage nations alike, and fully believing that her ancient traditions would never permit her to break her word, numbers of British subjects and European immigrants settled in the country with a view of making it their home, and invested largely in land and property, on the strength of the security and protection afforded by British rule.

'That the value of property increased at least threefold during the English occupation, and that the increase progressed in a ratio correspondent with the reliance placed on the promises of English officials. Indeed, some of your petitioners are prepared to state, on oath if required, that they invested money immediately after, or in direct consequence of, a statement made by a governor of the Transvaal or a minister of the British Crown.

'That the towns are almost exclusively inhabited by loyal subjects, and English farmers and traders are scattered all over the country.

'That the inhabitants of European or Cape extraction, a large proportion of whom have settled in the country since the English occupation, form at the lowest estimate one in seven of the white population, and are in the possession of from one-third to one-half of the property, exclusive of Crown lands. The total white population is not more than 40,000, while the natives are estimated at about 700,000. In Pretoria alone during the late war, 4300 people, not including the military, took shelter in the camp from the Boers, and were rationed by the Government.

'That a large number of the Boer population who had learned to appreciate the advantages of a settled rule, refused to fight against the British during the late war, and took refuge, some in laagers of their own, and others among the natives. The unexpected termination of the war presses with peculiar hardness on these loyal Boers, as it renders it impossible for them to return in safety to their homes, and has practically ruined them, as a reward for their loyalty and trust in the honour of England.

'That the natives residing in the Transvaal and surrounding the borders, are, without exception, in favour of English rule, and were with difficulty restrained during the recent war from making raids on their own account against the Boers. That they are unable to comprehend why the protection of England had been so suddenly withdrawn, and that your petitioners believe that they will not submit to Boer rule in any shape or form. Your petitioners fear that the withdrawal of the British troops will be the signal for a general rising of the natives, and numerous complications will ensue, in which the British Government must be involved.

'That in various parts of the country the unprotected loyal inhabitants owed their safety, if not their lives, during the war, to the natives, who informed the Boers that if they were maltreated by them, the natives would instantly intervene with an armed force. In particular on the western border, Montsiwe, a Betshuana chief, collected a commando of three thousand men, and gave formal notice to the Boer commandant of the district that if he injured the loyal Europeans and Boers, the latter of whom had taken refuge from the rebel Boers in laagers of their own, and at his kraal, he would at once advance with his whole force.

'That, in response to the call of the Government, 700 volunteers took up arms against the rebels in Pretoria alone. All these endured privations and discomfort, and the mounted volunteers, who were principally engaged, had *one in four of their number killed or disabled*. The town was wholly evacuated, at the desire of the military authorities, and the population lived more than three months in a military camp, abandoning their homes and occupations. The privations and dangers incident to such a state of things were cheerfully endured, and even the wounded found consolation in the assured conviction that their great mother country would never desert her children, and the revulsion of feeling consequent upon the sudden and unexpected fickleness and defection of England has produced the deepest feelings of humiliation, shame, and chagrin.

'That in the other towns, where the presence of a garrison enabled them to do so, many of the inhabitants co-operated with the English troops, and in some instances endured greater hardships than the people of Pretoria. Many who were desirous of aiding in the repression of the rebellion were prevented by the rebel Boers, and some were compelled by threats and violence to take up arms against their own Government. Some were foully and treacherously murdered, and others were plundered, even to their ruin.

'That the prosperity of the country, which was steadily progressing under a settled rule, has received a sudden check, and the hope that the Transvaal would be the vanguard of civilisation in Central South Africa is frustrated. All enterprise and commercial intercourse are paralyzed, and if, as your petitioners are informed and believe, the banks are about to withdraw from the country, the want of security evidenced by this withdrawal will prevent any introduction of capital, and lead to the recall of much that has been already invested, which will consequently prevent the development of the resources of the country, and result in the abandonment of all the projects contemplated for its advancement, including the railway to the seaboard.

'That most of the loyal inhabitants intend to realize their property, even at a sacrifice, and to leave the country, but that those who are compelled by force of circumstances to remain in it will be deprived of the protection and security afforded by English rule, and they respectfully submit they have a right to ask that the fullest and most substantial pledges be exacted from the contemplated Boer Government for their safety, and for the exercise of their privileges as British subjects.

'That, since the conclusion of the treaty, the Boers have violated its provisions by plundering loyal inhabitants, and by usurping authority and refusing to permit the exercise of the law by the *interim* Government appointed by the treaty. That this conduct, combined with past experience of Boer rule, proves the necessity for the rigid enforcement of the most substantial guarantees from the Boer Government.

'That the valuable property of your petitioners is now practically unsaleable, notwithstanding that some of it was purchased directly from the Government, and must in any event be extremely depreciated in value. That in other ways your petitioners have suffered largely both in person and property, and that some have lost everything they had. Many of the working classes, who have been deprived of their employment by the universal stagnation, have already left the country.

'That, however unwilling your petitioners are to believe the mother country to be capable of wilfully and deliberately abandoning her loyal children, who have trusted in her, they are reluctantly compelled to declare themselves cruelly deceived and betrayed; and although nothing can compensate for the breaking up of homes and the loss of friends and relatives who have sacrificed their lives uselessly, they claim the fullest material compensation for the losses and damages and depreciation of property, occasioned by acts of the Imperial Government over which they have had no control, and by which they are the principal sufferers.

'Your petitioners therefore humble pray:

'That the late dishonourable agreement for peace may be abrogated, or if it should be this time an irrevocable engagement, the most substantial guarantees shall be exacted from the contemplated Boer Government for the protection and security of those British subjects who are compelled to remain in the country, and that the fullest and most material compensation may be awarded for all the losses and damages and depreciation in the value of property and business caused by the war, and the peace which followed it, which has been concluded without the concurrence and against the wishes of your petitioners.

'And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray,' etc.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY.

'LONDON, *June* 1, 1881.

'SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of a communication signed by yourself and by Mr. Fawell on behalf of a Committee of the Loyal Inhabitants of the Transvaal.

'I observe that a document of a more formal character is promised, and for this as well as other reasons I will not notice in full detail the several allegations in the paper before me.

'At the same time I desire to state, with respect and sympathy, as much as appears to be material.

'It is stated, as I observe, that a promise was given by me that the Transvaal never should be given back. There is no mention of the terms or date of this promise. If the reference be to my letter of June 8, 1880, to Messrs. Kruger and Joubert, I do not think the language of that letter justifies the description given.

'Nor am I sure in what manner or to what degree the fullest liberty to manage their local affairs, which I then said Her Majesty's Government desired to confer on the white population of the Transvaal, differs from the settlement now about being made, in its bearing on the interests of those whom your committee represents.

'This object Her Majesty's Government hoped might have been attained by means of a South African Confederation. Unfortunately, owing to the disinclination of the Cape Parliament to proceed with the scheme, this hope was frustrated. Against the information then given us of the intention formed by the Dutch settlers in December 1879, we had at that time to set the official assurances which we received from South Africa. But the insurrection in the Transvaal proved in the most unequivocal manner that the large majority of the white settlers were strongly opposed to British rule, and were prepared to make the greatest sacrifices to recover their self-government. It was thus shown that the original ground upon which the Transvaal was annexed, namely, that the white settlers were prepared, if not to welcome, at all events to acquiesce in British rule, was entirely devoid of foundation, while no hope any longer remained of leading them by a prospect of confederation to an altered view. In these circumstances Her Majesty's Government have thought it their duty to avail themselves of the earliest inclinations, on the part of the Boers, of a disposition to a reasonable adjustment, in order to terminate a war which threatened the most disastrous consequences not only to the Transvaal but to the whole of South Africa.

'Her Majesty's Government willingly and thankfully acknowledge the loyal co-operation which Her Majesty's forces received at Pretoria and elsewhere by the inhabitants, and we sympathize with the privations and sufferings which they endured. I must, however, observe that so great was the preponderance of the Boers who rose in arms against the Queen's authority, that the whole country, except the posts occupied by the British troops, fell at once practically into their hands. Again, the memorialists themselves only estimate the proportion of settlers not Transvaal Boers at one-seventh. Nearly, though not quite, the whole of the Boers have appeared to be united in sentiment; and Her Majesty's Government could not deem it their duty to set aside the will of so large a majority by the only possible means—namely, the permanent maintenance of a powerful military force in the country. Such a course would have been inconsistent alike with the spirit of the Treaty of 1852, with the grounds on which the annexation was sanctioned, and with the general interests of South Africa, which especially require that harmony should prevail between the white races.

'On the other hand, in the settlement which is now in progress, every care will be taken to secure to the settlers, of whatever origin, the full enjoyment of their property and of all civil rights; and whilst Her Majesty's Government cannot recognise any general claim for compensation in respect of depreciation of property arising from the change of policy involved in the new arrangement, the question of compensation to either side for acts committed during the late troubles, not justified by the necessities of war, has been remitted to the Commission.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

'W. E. GLADSTONE.

'C. K. WHITE, Esq.'

MR. WHITE'S REJOINDER.

From a very elaborate reply by letter made by Mr. White, I extract the chief arguments he raised:—

'TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P., ETC.

'SIR,—On the 1st June last I had the honour to receive a letter in reply to one sent to you on behalf of the Committee of Loyal Inhabitants of the Transvaal, of whom I have the honour to be the President. I have deferred replying hitherto, in order to have an opportunity of consulting my fellow-delegate, Mr. Zietsmann, and other members of the Committee who had not arrived in England when I received your letter.

'Before making any remarks upon your letter, I must ask you to pardon me if I should be betrayed into any expressions which may appear to a person, who is not so vitally interested in the matter as I and my comrades are, stronger than the circumstances warrant. We are accustomed, in the Colonies, both to use and appreciate plain speaking, and I hope if I should, under the influence of strong feeling, occasionally use language which may be distasteful to Her Majesty's Government, you will believe that I do not intend any disrespect either to your colleagues or yourself, as the foremost

English statesmen of the age; but rather that I deeply regret you should have allowed yourselves unconsciously to be led away by the combined effects of panic, half information, and false sentimentalism, into acts of wrong-doing and injustice which, if completed, will leave a stain upon the reputation of those who have been parties to them, and which will be fraught with disastrous consequences to the British race in South Africa generally.

'I make this apology at the outset, because I find your letter commences with assurances of "respect" and "sympathy," which I am totally unable to reconcile with the latter part of the letter, and with the policy of indifference to the sufferings and desertion by the Crown, which appears to characterize the policy of the Government at the present moment. The assurances of respect and sympathy, when viewed in connection with the apparent policy of Her Majesty's advisers, appear to myself and my colleagues to bear some resemblance to the condolences which might be offered by the driver of the car of Juggernaut to the victims whom it has crushed in its progress. I do not suggest this resemblance in any offensive sense, nor do I anticipate that you personally would be capable for one moment of willingly hurting the feelings of men who have so much injury already to complain of, but I cannot refrain from remarking that assurances of respect and sympathy will be felt by the loyalists of South Africa to be wanton mockery, if they are to be the accompaniment of a policy which is the reverse of sympathetic towards men who claim, as of right, the fullest sympathy and the most ample justice from their countrymen at home.

'The first subject of importance with which your letter deals is the promise given by you that the Transvaal should never be given back, and which, as you conjecture, is contained in your letter of the 8th June 1880, to Messrs. Kruger and Joubert. You will, perhaps, remember that you referred the chairman of a meeting of loyal inhabitants at Pretoria, who wrote to you for an assurance which should quieten all apprehensions of the loyalists, to the same letter as the final expression of your opinion with reference to the retrocession of the Transvaal. The letter, consequently, became not only a conclusive reply to the Boer agitators, but also a guarantee and a promise to the loyal inhabitants, and a continuation of the series of guarantees which had been frequently given on previous occasions by authorized representatives of the English nation.

'In your letter to me you claim that the language of the letter does not justify the description given. With the greatest respect I submit that it does, and I will quote the words on which I and also my colleagues base the opinion that it does unequivocally pledge the Government to the non-relinquishment of the Transvaal.

'The actual words of the letter are :—

'"Looking at all the circumstances, both of the Transvaal and the rest of South Africa, and to the necessity of preventing a renewal of the disorders which might lead to disastrous consequences, not only to the Transvaal, but to the whole of South Africa, *our judgment is that the Queen cannot be advised to relinquish the Transvaal;* but consistently with the maintenance of that sovereignty, we desire that the white inhabitants of the Transvaal should, without prejudice to the rest of the population, enjoy the fullest liberty to manage their local affairs."

'The words, "our judgment is that the Queen cannot be advised to relinquish the Transvaal," appear to me and my colleagues to bear only one meaning, and that is, that they convey "a promise . . . that the Transvaal never should be given back." It must be borne in mind that the individuals who acted in pursuance of your words, could only read your intentions from the words themselves, to which they attached additional importance, because they were the advised and deliberate utterances of the head of the Government, that is, of the most authoritative exponent of the intentions of the English nation. As a matter of fact, the words were accepted both by the loyalists and by the Boers, in the only sense which, we respectfully submit, they will bear without reading between the lines, or doing violence to the ordinary rules of grammatical construction, viz.: that the Government had come to the deliberate determination that "under no circumstances could the Queen's authority in the Transvaal be relinquished." The effect of your words on the loyalists was to confirm the security which previous assurances of ministers had given, that the annexation was irreversible; but they caused intense disappointment to the Boer agitators, whose hopes had been encouraged by your having used the word "repudiate" during your electioneering campaign in Midlothian, in a sense which you afterwards explained not to mean the abandonment of the annexation, but which the Boers interpreted in a manner most favourable to their wishes. The disappointment at what they, in common with us, considered a final and official decision, was one of the factors which induced them to rebel. If the words of your letter had not effectually dashed the hopes they entertained of obtaining a reversal of the annexation, the war would have been unnecessary. They fought to obtain what they could not get without fighting. But your letter of the 8th June not only contained this final and absolute announcement of the policy of England, but it gave the reasons for arriving at it, in words which so aptly express the case of the loyalists, that I quote them *in extenso.* They are as follows:—

'"It is undoubtedly matter for much regret that it should, since the annexation, have appeared that so large a number of the population of Dutch origin in the Transvaal are opposed to the annexation of that territory, but *it is impossible now to consider that question as if it were presented for the first time.* We have to do with a state of things which has existed for a considerable period, *during which obligations have been contracted* especially, though not exclusively, towards the native population, *which cannot be set aside.*"

'In your speech in the House of Commons, on the debate on Mr. Peter Rylands' motion condemning the annexation of the country, and the enforcement of British supremacy in it, which was defeated by a majority of 96, on the 21st January in the present year, you used words of similar import. You are reported in the *Times* of the 22nd January as saying:—

'"To disapprove the annexation of a country is one thing, to abandon that annexation is another. Whatever we do, we must not blind ourselves to the legitimate consequences of facts. By the annexation of the Transvaal we contracted new obligations. . . . . I must look at the obligations entailed by the annexation, and if in my opinion, and in the opinion of many on this side of the House, wrong was done by the annexation itself, *that would not warrant us in doing fresh, distinct, and separate wrong by a disregard of the obligation which that annexation entailed.* These obligations have been referred to in this debate, and have been mentioned in the compass of a single sentence. First, there was the obligation entailed towards the English and other settlers in the Transvaal, perhaps including a minority, though a very small minority, of the Dutch Boers themselves; secondly, there was the obligation to the native races; and, thirdly, there was the obligation we entailed upon ourselves in respect of the responsibility which was already incumbent upon us, and which we, by the annexation, largely extended, for the future peace and tranquillity of South Africa."

'I am at a loss to understand the statement in your letter to me of the 1st ultimo, that "the insurrection in the Transvaal proved in the most unequivocal manner that the large majority of the white settlers were strongly opposed to British rule. . . . It was *thus* shown that the original ground upon which the Transvaal was annexed—namely, that the white settlers were prepared, if not to welcome, at all events to acquiesce in British rule—was entirely devoid of foundation." I am at a loss to understand this statement, because in your letter of June 1880, you state that it then appeared that a large number of the population of Dutch origin in the Transvaal were opposed to the annexation of that country, but nevertheless, and in spite of the recognition of this fact *then*, you did not then consider it advisable to relinquish the Queen's sovereignty. If words are to have any value attached to them, is it not evident that Her Majesty's Government were fully conscious, previously to and independently of the war, that the majority of the Dutch population of the Transvaal were opposed to the annexation, but that obligations since contracted did not then warrant the reversal of the annexation? And I would respectfully ask whether the obligations to the English and other settlers, and to the natives, on which you laid stress then, and which you then considered were so paramount, and so binding on the Government that you could not advise Her Majesty to relinquish the Transvaal, are less binding now when so many faithful subjects of the Crown in the Transvaal have laid down their lives, and so many more have lost their property and suffered in body and in mind in consequence of their loyalty, and their dependence upon the word of yourself and other representatives of the English people? Are not the obligations to the European and other settlers intensified rather than lessened? And are not the obligations to the natives also intensified? If you will ask the Secretary of Native Affairs of the Transvaal, whether the natives were loyal during the war, he will tell you that the natives were not only loyal, but desirous, nay, even eager, of testifying their loyalty by being allowed to fight the Boers, and the most strenuous exertions were required to make them remain quiet. If "the wrong done by the annexation" (which I do not admit) would not then warrant you in doing "fresh, distinct, and separate wrong by a disregard of those obligations," will it warrant you now? I would ask you, sir, to remember that I am not citing the loose ramblings of some local politician, but the chosen and deliberately expressed opinions of the leading statesman of the country, then, as now, the Prime Minister of England, which were read at the time according to their plain grammatical meaning, and which were acted upon accordingly.

'But, sir, you were not the only member of Her Majesty's Government who used expressions which led people to believe that the Transvaal could not be given back, and so confirmed the pledges of the previous Government. I presume Her Majesty's Government is not prepared to repudiate the official utterances of Lord Kimberley, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies. I find his Lordship telegraphing to the High Commissioner of South Africa, in May 1880.

'"Under *no* circumstances can the Queen's authority in the Transvaal be relinquished."

'And, further, in a despatch dated the 20th May, Lord Kimberley confirmed his telegram, and said that the sovereignty of the Queen in the Transvaal could not be relinquished.

'On the 24th May his Lordship stated in the House of Lords that the Government would not abandon the Transvaal, and in the course of his speech he used the following expressions:—

'"There was a still stronger reason than that for not receding; it was impossible to say what calamities such a step as receding might not cause; we had, at the cost of much blood and treasure, restored peace, and the effect of our now reversing our policy would be to leave the province in a state of anarchy, and possibly to cause an internecine war. For such a risk he could not make himself responsible—the number of the natives in the Transvaal was estimated at about 800,000, and that of the whites less than 50,000. Difficulties with the Zulus and frontier tribes would again arise; and, looking as they must to South Africa as a whole, the Government, *after a careful consideration of the position*, came to the conclusion that we could not relinquish the Transvaal. *Nothing could be more unfortunate than uncertainty* in respect to such a matter" (Hansard, ccliii. p. 208).

'But it may be said that the treaty proposes to reserve a strip of land between the Boers and the outside natives on the eastern frontier. When the news of the peace first reached Pretoria, and after the loyal inhabitants had recovered from the immediate effects of the unexpected and bitter disappointment caused by the proposed desertion by their mother country of her faithful subjects, a little consolation was attempted to be picked out of the provision with reference to the retainer of a belt of territory to the east of the 30th degree of longitude. It was thought that the Government had reserved this strip as a place to which the loyal inhabitants might be allowed to migrate, and still preserve their privileges as Englishmen; and this supposition was borne out by the fact that the proposed territory contained the villages of Leydenburg, Wakkerstroom, and Utrecht, the coal and gold mines, and the district of New Scotland, all inhabited or owned principally by Europeans. But this hope was dispelled when it was announced that the strip was devised to protect, not the loyal whites or the loyal natives, but the rebel—and, consequently, the petted and favoured—Boers from the natives! and now, the rumour is spread abroad that the whole country is to be restored to the Boers, without any reservation whatever.

'With reference to your remark that "you are not sure" in what manner or to what degree the fullest liberty to manage their local affairs, spoken of in your letter of 1880, differs from the settlement now made. If, sir, you are not sure, I and my friends are sure that it does differ essentially, and the Boers are sure also it does. They use the term "own" government in "their" proclamations, and in their copy of the treaty, and they claim that they have obtained what they were asking, namely, the granting of their independence.

'Wherein do the present terms agree with the grant of a representative government which your letter of June 1880 contemplated, and which was all it contemplated, for otherwise the insurrection would not have taken place! Is it in the acknowledgment of the Queen as "Suzerain"? The word does not mean "Sovereign," and even if it meant it, what is the use of words only? Is it in the appointment of a Resident? Without an army at his back he will be a helpless dummy; and even if an army is kept on the frontiers, he will be two hundred miles from it at Pretoria. Is it in the reservation of a strip of territory? Certainly not. Where then is it?

'Your letter also says that care will be taken to secure to the white settlers, of whatever origin, the full enjoyment of their property, and of all civil rights. Every care—even the most tender care—is being taken of those who have obtained by force of arms liberal concessions from the Government; but I am afraid very little care, and very little sympathy, is taken or shown for us, who have borne sorrow and suffering, and have done our duty against the common enemy, who buried all our political animosities when we saw English troops attacked, and who stood forward at the call of the Imperial authorities to fight, and some, alas ! to die, for the maintenance of British supremacy. Whatever our faults may have been, however much we have erred otherwise, we ask you to give us credit for our loyalty. Some of us were deeply opposed to the autocratic system of Imperial rule which prevailed in the Transvaal, and which helped, in the judgment of some of us, towards the war. I, for one, opposed the Government strenuously, though unsuccessfully, on one occasion at least, because they would not grant to the country the representative institutions which I believed necessary to ensure its proper development, and to allay the opposition of the Dutch element. But when the sword was drawn, when it came to being an enemy or being loyal, we, all of us, came to the front, and strove to do our duty in full dependence on the pledged, and, as we hoped, the inviolate word of England. And now it is very bitter for us to find we trusted in vain ; that, notwithstanding our sufferings and privations, in which our wives and children had to bear their share ; and that notwithstanding our losses, including for many of us the irreparable loss of valuable lives, we are dealt with as clamorous claimants at arm's length, and told, as I was told by a member of the Government, we are "too pronounced" in our views. If, sir, you had seen, as I have seen, promising young citizens of Pretoria dying of wounds received for their country, and if you had the painful duty, as I have had, of bringing to their friends at home the last mementoes of the departed ; if you had seen the privations and discomforts which delicate women and children bore without murmuring for upwards of three months ; if you had seen strong men crying like children at the cruel and undeserved desertion of England ; if you had seen the long strings of half-desperate loyalists, shaking the dust off their feet as they left the country, which I saw on my way to Newcastle ; and if you yourself had invested your all on the strength of the word of England, and now saw yourself in a fair way of being beggared by the acts of the country in whom you trusted, you would, sir, I think, be "pronounced ;" and England would ring with eloquent entreaties and threats which would compel a hearing. We, sir, are humble subjects of England, from the other side of the equator, it is true, but none the less subjects, and perhaps the more entitled to consideration for that reason. We have no eloquence but the eloquence of our sufferings, of our losses, and our cruel desertion; but we urge our claims upon you as a matter of justice, of right, and of national morality; and we submit, that if you do not listen to them you will incur the danger of offering a larger premium to rebellion than to loyalty; of alienating for ever the cordial respect of a number of loyal persons; of forfeiting all confidence in the national honour and justice; of utterly destroying the moral influence of England in South Africa—an influence which means more and is worth more than mere military *prestige;* and of handing down to posterity the name of your administration as one which was guilty of one of the greatest acts of national perfidy towards faithful subjects ever perpetrated.

'I observe in your letter you speak of "compensation," but that even in speaking of it you restrict it to acts *not* justified by the necessities of war, and make no allowance for depreciation in the value of property. The question of compensation is fully dealt with in a paper presented to the Royal Commission by Mr. Nixon, a member of our Committee, of which I presume you have a copy, and of which I shall be glad to send you one if you require it. If compensation could satisfy us, then I think the paper proves, both on the ground of the express warranty afforded by the promises of England ever since the annexation, and because England is graciously and voluntarily depriving the loyalists of their status as British subjects, and abandoning them to the Boers against their will, as the result of Imperial acts over which the constitution of the country did not permit them to have any control, she is bound to compensate them for *all* losses, both direct and indirect.

'Mr. Nixon fortifies his position by citing the analogy of a public company which should offer land in a new country to settlers, on promises confirmed at various times and in every possible way, both of its own motion and in response to requests of a Committee of Settlers for further assurance not to alienate, and which should deliberately, advisedly, in fraud of, and against the will of the settlers, hand the land and them over to the declared enemies of the settlers. But, sir, I submit that there are many cases which do not admit of pecuniary compensation, and it appears to me that our case falls within that category. What money can compensate us for the loss of friends and relatives? What money can compensate for the breaking up of homes, especially in the case of the more delicate and weakly part of the population? What money can compensate for the loss of our status as British subjects? That status is generally considered as of value. If some Greek or Maltese, who can by some happy accident call himself a British subject, suffers injury to his rights as a subject in Europe, all England rings with it. And can money compensate the 8000 loyalists who are about to be deprived of their nationality and turned into Boers in Africa? And how are the loyal Boers and the natives to be compensated by any pecuniary gifts?

'We claim, sir, at least as much justice as the Boers. We are faithful subjects of England, and have suffered and are suffering for our fidelity. Surely we, the friends of our country, who stood by her in the time of trial, have as much right to consideration as rebels who fought against her. We rely on her word. We rely on the frequently repeated pledges and promises of her ministers, in which we have trusted. We rely on her sense of moral right not to do us the grievous wrong which this miserable peace contemplates. We rely on her fidelity to obligations, and on her ancient reputation for honour and honesty. We rely on the material consequences which will follow on a breach of faith to us. England cannot afford to desert us after having solemnly pledged herself to us. She cannot afford to undergo the danger of internecine war, of native risings, of the danger of her possessions in South Africa rising in revolt and falling into the hands of a rival power, of the premium offered to rebellion, of the danger of losing her reputation for being a nation whose word can be trusted, or of the retribution which surely follows on national as on individual wrong-doing. On all grounds, even the very lowest, we cry for justice; and we implore you, sir, in particular, not to allow the close of an illustrious career to be sullied by the wanton abandonment of the loyal defenders of the national honour, and an entire disregard for obligations which you yourself have acknowledged to be binding.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient humble servant,

'C. K. WHITE, President of the
Committee of Loyal Inhabitants of the Transvaal.'

This letter, I believe, was unanswered; and, indeed, there could be no answer to it. The cheap half measure of justice done to the Boers was to be performed partly at the expense of that section of the inhabitants of the Transvaal who had not taken up arms against Her Majesty. To use a familiar idiom, it was a robbery of Peter for the payment of Paul, and in the history of South Africa no policy of the English Government has gone further, nay, so far, to shake the allegiance of Englishmen to the paternal Government than the issues of the Transvaal war.

In the House of Lords, on the 21st March, Earl Cairns had already, with unexampled point, asked: 'I want to know what we have been fighting about in the interval. If this arrangement is what was intended, why did you not give it at once? Why did you spend the blood and treasure of the country like water, only to give at the end what you had intended to give at the beginning? We know that there are those who have lost in the Transvaal that which was dearer to them than the light of their eyes. They have been consoled with the reflection that the brave men who died, died fighting for their Queen and country. Are the mourners now to be told that these men were fighting for a country which the Government had determined to abandon, and that they were fighting for a Queen who was no longer to be the sovereign of that country? This has,' he continued 'been somewhere styled the "Peace of Mount Prospect;" but I doubt whether it will not go down as the "Capitulation of Downing Street."' Lord Kimberley's defence was summed up in the words, 'The object of this settlement is to preserve all that was valuable in our position when we annexed the country.'

As regards the debate in the House of Commons later, on the motion of Sir Michael Hicks Beach, the former Secretary of State for the Colonies, there are one or two points in the speech of the Prime Minister which are remarkable. He inferentially laid blame on Sir Owen Lanyon, whilst he excused the policy of the Government up to the time of the outbreak of war, on the score of it being misled or incorrectly informed by its agents. Granted that Sir Owen Lanyon communicated all his knowledge—which was next to nothing—of the feelings and intentions of the Boers, had not Mr. Gladstone been personally addressed by the Boer leaders, and was there no suspicion in his mind that anything but peace and contentment reigned in the breasts of a people wearied out with false promises? The right honourable gentleman contended that the British had violated a solemn convention entered into with the Boers,—the Sand River Convention,—and violated it unwarrantably. Is it worth while inquiring if the act of reparation for such an offence ought to fall short in value of the broken treaty? The British having violated the Sand River Convention, Mr. Gladstone, as the discoverer of that offence and the judge in the matter, is anxious to mete out to the persons aggrieved the justice which is theirs by concrete right. In equity, when a broken agreement is the object of a suit, and the breach of contract is proved, the judgment, as a rule, is that the person aggrieved shall enjoy and have secured to him his rights under his bond, or at least an equivalent, if the order of the court cannot restore to him his actual loss. In diplomacy it seems that the precedent has now been set up: that one state may wrong its neighbour, perpetuate that wrong, acknowledge that wrong, and, as oppressor and the superior power, force the oppressed one to accept, as the indemnity in full, one-half the value it deprived it of in the first instance of oppression. And this precedent is that furnished by the English Liberal Government of to-day. For sterling honesty, commend us to any other diplomatic method of doing right than this.

Mr. Gladstone told the House of Commons: 'We had no right to break that Sand River Convention except on the ground of offence on the part of the Boers against ourselves: but, unfortunately, we looked upon pleas relating to matters of remote apprehension and policy which invested us with no title at all to deal in such a way with a solemn instrument so contracted. If we are to talk of honour, of mediation, of blushing, it is those who deal with these solemn instruments in a manner so unscrupulous who ought to be very careful how they throw these stringent and formidabe terms at their opponents. The annexation was to be brought into contemplation only if it was agreeable to the will of the people, or of a sufficient number of the people. I presume there was a real belief on the part of Lord Carnarvon and of the right honourable gentleman that a great majority of the Boers were favourable to annexation; but very soon after that annexation, out of 8000 adult males, 6600 signed a declaration remonstrating against the annexation, and declining to accept it. It was alleged that that petition was obtained by intimidation or undue influence. I can conceive of a charge of that kind where a petition is promoted by the ruling Power; but this was a petition which expressed the sense of the people adverse to the ruling Power, and in the circumstances it was impossible for you to have a more genuine, effective, and legitimate expression of the sense of the community at the time.'

Yet, knowing these figures, knowing the history of the Transvaal from the date of the annexation to the date of the insurrection, he falls back on Sir Owen Lanyon in looking for a scapegoat for the delinquencies of his Cabinet, and explains that the error, if any, of that Cabinet has been the error of acting on unreliable information.

Mr. Gladstone continued: 'I had just stated that the Boers had no share whatever except a defensive share in those military operations, and that being so, I put it plainly to the House that it would have been most unjust and cruel—I believe it would have been cowardly and mean—if, on account of those operations, we had refused to go forward with the negotiations which, before the first of those miscarriages occurred, we had already declared we were willing to go on with.'

Here again, no doubt, Mr. Gladstone had been misinformed by the agents of the British Government. Our agents must have—if this statement is justifiable—informed their principal that at Potchefstrom the British garrison wantonly attacked the Boers; that Colonel Anstruther marched with the 94th Regiment against a body of peaceable men, and fired on them without giving a moment's warning; that Pretoria went out to meet the Dutch farmers, and commenced slaughtering them when found; that Natal became the Transvaal, and Laing's Nek part of the ground recognised as a Boer possession by the Sand River Convention; that the Ingogo fight was one forced on the Boers, who, surrounded by the British, were cut off from the means of existence; that the British attacked the Boers on the top of the Majuba Hill, and that for that occasion the Majuba Hill was transported into Transvaal territory; and that the Biggarsberg, to accommodate the theory of the right honourable gentleman, also was included within the boundaries laid down by the same Convention, and in occupying its northern slopes the Boers were treading on what was theirs by right.

Mr. Gladstone went on to say: 'The accusation had been brought against the Boers of fostering slavery. On that point a letter quoted in the *Times* of the 27th of June, from Bishop Colenso, one of the most courageous and persistent friends of the natives, might, he thought, be regarded as a better authority than the accusation brought forward by interested contractors and land-jobbers.'

I have said, after reproducing Mr. C. K. White's reply to Mr. Gladstone, that the letter of Mr. White was unanswered; in that I am wrong, as undoubtedly the five last words of the above quotation contain an allusion to Mr. C. K. White, and that is the reply to his argumentative letter. 'You are a land-jobber and a contractor, and you and your arguments are therefore not worth consideration.'

With the 'slave-making' cry raised by the loyalists I never had any sympathy, because I believed there was a hollow ring about it; and I told several representative men that they would do their cause more harm than good by raking up that matter. To answer argument by flouting it as that of a land-jobber and contractor, is as much a display of good taste as would be an allusion to the proprietary interests of Mr. Gladstone in certain collieries in Flintshire as determining the value of his arguments upon a measure affecting the royalty dues on the output of coal in England.

Whilst the Royal Commission was sitting, there took place two trials—one at Pretoria, of men accused of the murder of Captain Elliot; and another in the Orange Free State, of Boers charged with murdering one Dr. Barbour. In both cases the accused were discharged; both trials were the veriest mockery of a court of justice. The cases were both on a par: prisoners shot by their escort. The circumstances of Captain Elliot's murder, as related by Captain Lambart, I have already given; the circumstances of Barbour's murder are thus told by Dyas, a companion of his, who escaped in as marvellous a manner as did Captain Lambart:—

'BROMHER'S FAYTON, *March* 5, 1878.

'I, Walter Dyas, started with Dr. Barbour from the Wet Koppies, Orange Free State, on Monday, 21st February, to go to the Boer Camp, in answer to an advertisement of Commandant Joubert's for a surgeon to attend the sick and wounded at the Boer camp. I went as doctor's assistant. On arriving at the camp on Tuesday evening, Dr. Barbour asked for Commandant Joubert. We were told that he was in the lower camp, and two men took us down to the camp. On arriving, we were told he was not there. We then returned to the other camp. When we got back we were made prisoners; our hands were tied behind us, and we were searched, after which we were tied to the pole of the wagon in a sitting position, and left there all night. Next morning we were loosened, and taken under the wagon ; some coffee and bread were given us. After being there some two or three hours, our horses were brought up, and we were told to saddle them. We were then ordered to go into a tent to a field-cornet there ; our things, which had been taken from us the night before, were then given back, and we had some more coffee. We were next ordered to mount our horses, and two men, armed with rifles, were sent with us to the Free State border. On arriving there, we were told to dismount, and take our rugs and waterproofs off the saddles, for they (the escort) were ordered to take horses and saddles back to the camp. We did so, and bid the men "good-bye." We walked on, and when about forty yards off, I heard the report of a rifle. I thought it was a signal, but on turning round, I heard Dr. Barbour say, "My God, I am shot!" and saw him fall. I also fell at the same time, but looking back, saw that one of the men had a rifle levelled at me. I thought it as well to make a good run as a bad stand, so I jumped and ran, dodging about. When I got eighteen yards off they fired, and I felt a bullet strike me under the hip. I fell face towards them, and lay still. I imagined one of the men aiming at me, and as I lay he fired, the bullet whizzing close past my head. As I still lay perfectly quiet, the two men jumped on their horses and galloped away, leaving our two horses. I then got up and went to Dr. Barbour, whom I found quite dead ; he was lying on his left side. The bullet had gone in at his back, and out through his breast. I then left, and walked for about two hours, sitting down every ten minutes to gain strength. At length I came in sight of a house, and waved a piece of my shirt, which I had used to bandage my wound with. The people saw it, and came and carried me to the house. I have now been eleven days here ; the owner of the house is a farmer, and he has treated me very kindly. I cannot understand why I was shot, as I was not tried on account of anything, and went only to the Boer camp as medical assistant. I believe the deed was not ordered, but was simply the brutality of two wilful murderers. 'WALTER DYAS.'

For this cold-blooded act the only excuse offered is that Barbour had previously made many enemies in the Transvaal during a residence there, and that it was suspected he had come to the Boer camp as a spy or to poison Piet Joubert.

In Pretoria the loyal inhabitants strained every nerve to arrest the setting of the tide in the direction it was known to be running. On the 13th July a deputation waited on the President or Commissioner, and presented documents in these terms:—

'TO HER MAJESTY'S ROYAL COMMISSION, PRETORIA.

'PRETORIA, *July* 13, 1881.

'GENTLEMEN,—We, the undersigned, have been deputed by a Committee of the Loyal Inhabitants of Pretoria to represent them before your Royal Commission.

'We would first hand in a letter, signed by a few of the representative loyal inhabitants of Pretoria, touching upon the question of representation by ballot.

'There are many other points which we wish to discuss, but before doing so would impress upon your Royal Commission the following, showing the position which the loyal inhabitants have been forced to occupy, more especially as it is the general opinion that we are on the eve of difficult and very probably dangerous

'We, the loyal inhabitants, feel deeply grieved that in the peace which was so hastily brought about, Her Majesty's Government did not think fit to consult us who had *sacrificed so much* for its maintenance, and whom it was under obligations to support, and who were and are an important section of this country. And we are of opinion that the peace dictated by one section of the inhabitants of his country alone, with arms in their hands, has failed to give general satisfaction, and further submit that the settlement arising out of that peace which we are led to believe is being made will not be permanent unless the interests of every section of the inhabitants of this country are consulted.

'Without recapitulating all that has happened, the loyal inhabitants may be permitted to remind your Royal Commission that large numbers of them came here relying on the oft-repeated assurances of Her Majesty's Government that this country would for ever remain British territory, and *all* of them have compromised themselves in the eyes of those to whom it is contemplated to hand over this country, by the support which they have uniformly given to Her Majesty's Government. When the war broke out, the loyal inhabitants left their homes and property at the call of that Government. In that war, many of them lost friends and relatives, in killed and wounded; many more lost goods and property of all descriptions, and there is not one of them whose prospects have not been seriously injured. Nevertheless, they respectfully submit that Her Majesty's Government has, as yet, reserved its sympathy only for those who have been in arms against it; while it has, in a manner, ignored those who have supported it.

'We would further point out, that at the present moment a large amount of the property of loyalists is in the hands of the Boers; and yet, notwithstanding the generous terms of peace given them and the request or command of the Triumvirate, no attempt has been made to release such property.

'In view, therefore, of the circumstances of the present case, the loyal inhabitants consider that Her Majesty's Government is under no ordinary obligation towards them, inasmuch as it is entirely owing to their action, and to the part they took in its support, that they are placed in their present position; and they would respectfully submit, that if it pleased Her Hajesty's Government to be generous to those who opposed it, they who have supported Her Majesty's Government as loyal subjects have still a higher claim, and under these circumstances it is that the loyalists urge their right to be consulted as to their interests in the provisions of a settlement which so vitally concerns them.—We have the honour to be, gentlemen, your obedient servants.'

(Signed by Deputation.)

After this another member of the deputation read the letter referred to in the former one as to obtaining a *plébiscite*:—

'TO THEIR EXCELLENCIES THE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION.

'GENTLEMEN,—As representing a large and important section of the people of the Transvaal, who find themselves unrepresented before the Royal Commission now sitting at Pretoria, we would respectfully beg to lay before you the following:—

'In looking over the instructions, as far as they have been made public, given to your Excellencies by Lord Kimberley for your guidance in the settlement of Transvaal affairs, we find you are fully and amply authorized to investigate all matters pertaining hereto, as appears from a letter under date March 31, 1881.

'It has seemed to many in this country that adequate steps have not been taken to fully test the real feeling of the white population in the Transvaal, and until such is done, no settlement that may be made can or will be a lasting one.

'It has been stated, we are informed, in some very influential quarters, that those known as the "Loyals" form a minority too small to be worthy of notice.

'We fully believe that such is by no means the case, and we must strenuously urge upon your Excellencies our right as inhabitants to have our representatives before your Commission jointly to assist in such matters as may be for the mutual benefit of all.

'We maintain that the section which we represent is not small, that it is influential and intelligent, and that it represents the commerce and capital of the country. That the taxation, no matter under what form of Government, falls more directly upon us than upon the party who are said to be in the majority.

'That even if we were shown to be in a considerable minority, we claim to have a share and interest in the settlement now being made for the future government of the country.

'At present, under the existing arrangement, we feel we are unrepresented, inasmuch as the Boer leaders now representing their party before the Royal Commission have only been recognised by Sir Evelyn Wood "as representing the people of the Transvaal then under arms" (see Schedule 1 of peace condition).

'That although we are aware that there are almost insurmountable difficulties in the way of arriving at anything like a correct idea of the feelings of the people, still we would respectfully suggest that a "plebiscite," taken by means of a ballot, would most fully meet the justice of the case.

'We would therefore urge upon your Excellencies the desirability of carrying out some such measure.

'Such a step would, we feel assured, meet the views of both loyal Boers and English, and, we think, would be acceptable to all parties.

'The form of ballot which we would advise is a simple one, viz.—

'That no names be used in the voting papers; that the names of intending voters at the different polling stations be registered before the polling officers.

'That on proving he is entitled to vote, two papers of the same colour be given to each voter, on one of which is printed or written the word "Yes," on the other "No."

'One or other of these papers he places in a box for waste votes, the remaining portion to be put in the ballot box in a room apart from the room in which the registering officers sit.

'Registering officers to be one of each party. By some such simple arrangement, a fairly truthful *consensus* of opinion may be gained, and the real sentiments and feelings of the Transvaal people more properly ascertained.

'We are the more emboldened to press this measure, as we see in the instructions to the Commission that Lord Kimberley makes the wishes of the people of the Leydenburg district a most important point in any future settlement.—We have the honour to be, gentlemen, your most obedient servants.'

Fifty-seven signatures followed.

'PRETORIA, *June* 22, 1881.'

In support of this view, it was stated that the loyalists believed that if a fair and unbiassed vote of the country could be obtained, there would be found to be four loyalists to seven disloyalists, and that at one time since the annexation there was actually a majority of the inhabitants in favour of British rule. One of the great obstacles to finding out the proportion in which the two parties stood was, that in the country the amount of coercion was such that men could not vote according to their convictions, more especially after the manner in which the British Government had thrown them over. The desire of the loyalists was that the Commission should see fairly for themselves in what proportion the relative parties stood to each other, when they would be in a better position to arrive at a satisfactory settlement of the difficult questions at issue.

It was also pointed out that the war had embittered the feeling between Boers and natives to a very great degree, and it was desirable for all parties that loyalists should not be mixed up in these quarrels.

The Commissioners said that under these circumstances it was intended to insert a clause in the Convention to absolve British subjects from military service.

It was further stated by the deputation, that in dealing with the Triumvirate the Commission were dealing with those who had no authority or power, as was evidenced, among other things, by the little attention paid to their orders to the Boers to give back the property of loyalists taken during the war. Loyalists were continually seeing their property in the hands of the Boers, and they would like to ask the Commission *how long an Englishman* would be allowed to retain the property of another without interference, and yet the Boers were allowed to do as they liked. Of course, if England paid the claims of loyalists, it was not of so much importance to them; but it was only fair to point out how little the Boers entered into the spirit which actuated England in making peace, and for the honour of England she should insist on all property not destroyed being handed back.

One of the Commissioners, Sir H. de Villiers, said that the reason why the Triumvirate could not get their followers to restore the property of loyalists, was no doubt because they (the Triumvirate) had only moral power.

In reply to further questions, the Commissioners said that all existing debts would have to be paid in gold, but they could make no provision for the future as against paper currency.

Beyond this point the efforts of the loyalists were in vain.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE CONVENTION.

ON the 3d August the Convention was signed and published at Pretoria, and the loyalists consecrated the hour by holding a mock funeral over a British flag.

Before the signatures of the contracting parties were affixed to the document, the President of the Royal Commission, addressing the Boer representatives, said:—

'Before signing the Convention, which we have now finally agreed to, we are anxious, whilst expressing our best wishes for the success of the future Transvaal State, not to conceal from the Transvaal representatives our opinion that the greatest danger which the future Government will have to contend with is the native difficulty. The impression left on the minds of the Commission is, that however anxious the leaders may be to restrain their people, the treatment of the natives by individuals has often been harsh and cruel. And if we may, as sincere well-wishers, express to you one word of parting advice, it would be this, that you should employ all the moral influence you possess, and all the legal power you can exercise, to secure for the natives, who have had no voice in the change now brought about, kind and considerate treatment.'

Mr. Pretorius made the laconic reply: 'We will do our best.'

The first article of the Convention sets forth:—

'Her Majesty's Commissioners for the settlement of the Transvaal territory, duly appointed as such by a commission passed under the royal sign-manual and signet, bearing date the 5th of April 1881, do hereby undertake and guarantee on behalf of Her Majesty, that from and after the 8th day of August 1881, complete self-government, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, will be accorded to the inhabitants of the Transvaal territory upon the following terms and conditions, and subject to the following reservations and limitations.'

Then follow the boundaries and beacons defining the limits of the territory, which it is unnecessary to reproduce here. The other clauses are :—

'Article II.—Her Majesty reserves to herself, her heirs and successors, (*a*) the right from time to time to appoint a British Resident in and for the said State, with such duties and functions as are hereinafter defined ; (*b*) the right to move troops through the said State in time of war, or in case of the apprehension of immediate war between the Suzerain Power and any foreign State or native tribe in South Africa ; and (*c*) the control of the external relations of the said State, including the conclusion of treaties and the conduct of diplomatic intercourse with foreign Powers, such intercourse to be carried on through Her Majesty's diplomatic and consular officers abroad.

'Article III.—Until altered by the Volksraad or other competent authority, all laws, whether passed before or after the annexation of the Transvaal territory to Her Majesty's dominions, shall, except in so far as they are inconsistent with or repugnant to the provisions of this Convention, be and remain in force in the said State, in so far as they shall be applicable thereto ; provided that no future enactment specially affecting the interest of natives shall have any force or effect in the said State without the consent of Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, first had and obtained and signified to the Government of the said State through the British Resident ; provided further, that in no case will the repeal or amendment of any laws which have been enacted since the annexation have a retrospective effect, so as to invalidate any acts done or liabilities incurred by virtue of such laws.

'Article IV.—On the 8th day of August 1881, the government of the said State, together with all rights and obligations thereto appertaining, and all State property taken over at the time of annexation, save and except munitions of war, will be handed over to Messrs. Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, Martinus Wessel Pretorius, and Petrus Jacobus Joubert, or the survivor or survivors of them, who will forthwith cause a Volksraad to be elected and convened, and the Volksraad thus elected and convened will decide as to the future administration of the government of the said State.

'Article V.—All sentences passed upon persons who may be convicted of offences contrary to the rules of civilised warfare committed during the recent hostilities will be duly carried out, and no alteration or mitigation of such sentences will be made or allowed by the Government of the Transvaal State without Her Majesty's consent, conveyed through the British Resident. In case there shall be any prisoners in any of the gaols of the Transvaal State whose respective sentences of imprisonment had been remitted in part by Her Majesty's administrator or other officer administering the government, such remission will be recognised and acted upon by the future Government of the said State.

'Article VI.—Her Majesty's Government will make due compensation for all losses or damage sustained by reason of such acts as are in Article VIII. hereinafter specified, which may have been committed by Her Majesty's forces during the recent hostilities, except for such losses or damage as may already have been compensated for; and the Government of the Transvaal State will make due compensation for all losses or damage sustained by reason of such acts as are in Article VIII. hereinafter specified, which may have been committed by the people who were in arms against Her Majesty during the recent hostilities, except for such losses and damage as may already have been compensated for.

'Article VII.—The decision of all claims for compensation, as in the last preceding article mentioned, will be referred to a Sub-Commission, consisting of the Hon. George Hudson, the Hon. Jacobus Petrus de Wet, and the Hon. John Gilbert Kotze. In case one or more of such Sub-Commissioners shall be unable or unwilling to act, the remaining Sub-Commissioner or Sub-Commissioners will, after consultation with the Government of the Transvaal State, submit, for the approval of Her Majesty's High Commissioner, the names of one or more persons to be appointed by him to fill the place or places thus vacated. The decisions of the said Sub-Commissioners, or of a majority of them, will be final. The said Sub-Commissioners will enter upon and perform their duties with all convenient speed. They will, before taking evidence, or ordering evidence to be taken in respect of any claim, decide whether such claim can be entertained at all under the rules laid down in the next succeeding article. In regard to the claims which cannot be so entertained, the Sub-Commissioners will, in the first instance, afford every facility for an amicable arrangement as to the amount payable in respect of any claim, and only in cases in which there is no reasonable ground for believing that an immediate amicable arrangement can be arrived at, will they take evidence, or order evidence to be taken. For the purpose of taking evidence and reporting thereon, the Sub-Commissioners may appoint deputies, who will, without delay, submit records of the evidence and their reports to the Sub-Commissioners. The Sub-Commissioners will arrange the sittings, and the sittings of their deputies, in such a manner as to afford the greatest convenience to the parties concerned and their witnesses. In no case will costs be allowed on either side other than the usual and reasonable expenses of witnesses whose evidence is certified by the Sub-Commissioners to have been necessary. Interest will not run on the amount of any claim, except as is hereinafter provided for. The said Sub-Commissioners will forthwith, after deciding upon any claim, announce their decision to the Government against which the award is made, and to the claimant. The amount of remuneration payable to the Sub-Commissioners and their deputies will be determined by the High Commissioner after all the claims have been decided upon. The British Government and the Government of the Transvaal State will pay proportionate shares of the said remuneration, and of the expenses of the Sub-Commissioners and their deputies, according to the amounts awarded against them respectively.

'Article VIII.—For the purpose of distinguishing claims to be accepted from those to be rejected, the Sub-Commissioners will be guided by the following rules, viz.:—Compensation will be allowed for losses or damage sustained by reason of the following acts committed during the recent hostilities, viz.: (*a*) Commandeering, seizure, or destruction of property, or damage done to property; (*b*) Violence done or threats used by persons in arms. In regard to acts under (*a*), compensation will be allowed for direct losses only. In regard to acts falling under (*b*), compensation will be allowed for actual losses of property or actual injury to the same, proved to have been caused by its enforced abandonment. No claims for indirect losses, except such as are in this article specially provided for, will be entertained. No claims which have been handed in to the secretary of the Royal Commission after the 1st day of July 1881 will be entertained, unless the Sub-Commission shall be satisfied that the delay was reasonable. When claims for loss of property are considered, the Sub-Commissioners will require distinct proof of the existence of the property, and that it neither has reverted nor will revert to the claimant.

'Article IX.—The Government of the Transvaal State will pay and satisfy the amount of every claim awarded against it within one month after the Sub-Commissioners shall have notified their decision to the said Government, and in default of such payment the said Government will pay interest at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum from the date of such default; but Her Majesty's Government may, at any time before such payment, pay the amount, with interest, if any, to the claimant in satisfaction of his claim, and may add the sum thus paid to any debt which may be due by the Transvaal State to Her Majesty's Government, as hereinafter provided for.

'Article X.—The Transvaal State will be liable for the balance of the debts for which the South African Republic was liable at the date of annexation, to wit: The sum of £48,000 in respect of the Cape Commercial Loan, and £85,667 in respect of the Railway Loan, together with amount due on the 8th August 1881 on account of the Orphan Chamber Debt, which now stands at £22,000, which debts will be a first charge upon the revenues of the State. The Transvaal State will moreover be liable for the lawful expenditure, lawfully incurred, for the necessary expenses of the Province since annexation, to wit, the sum of £265,000; which debt, together with such debts as may be incurred by virtue of the 9th Article, will be a second charge upon the revenue of the State.

'Article XI.—The debts due as aforesaid by the Transvaal State to Her Majesty's Government, will bear interest at the rate of three and a half per cent., and any portion of such debt as may remain unpaid on the 8th August 1882 shall be repayable by a payment for interest and sinking fund of six pounds and ninepence for £100 per annum, which will extinguish the debt in twenty-five years. The said payment of six pounds and ninepence per £100 shall be payable half-yearly in British currency on the 8th February and 8th August in each year; provided always, that the Transvaal State shall pay in reduction of the said debt the sum of £100,000 before the 8th August 1882, and shall be at liberty at the close of any half-year to pay off the whole or any portion of the outstanding debt.

'Article XII.—All persons holding property in the said State on the 8th day of August 1881, will continue to enjoy the rights of property which they have enjoyed since the annexation. No person who has remained loyal to Her Majesty during the recent hostilities shall suffer any molestation by reason of his loyalty, or be liable to any criminal prosecution or civil action for any part taken in connection with such hostilities; and all such persons will have full liberty to reside in the country, with enjoyment of all civil rights and protection for their persons and property.

'Article XIII.—Natives will be allowed to acquire land, but the grant or transfer of such land will be in every case made to and registered in the name of the Native Location Commission hereinafter mentioned in trust for such natives.

'Article XIV.—Natives will be allowed to move as freely within the country as may be consistent with the requirements of public order, and to leave it for the purpose of seeking employment elsewhere, or for other lawful purposes, subject always to the Pass Laws of the said State, as amended by the Legislature of the Province, or as may hereafter be enacted under the provisions of the 3rd Article of this Convention.

'Article XV.—The provisions of the 4th article of the Sand River Convention are hereby reaffirmed, and no slavery or apprenticeship partaking of slavery will be tolerated by the Government of the said State.

'Article XVI.—There will continue to be complete freedom of religion and protection from molestation for all denominations, provided the same be not inconsistent with morality and good order; and no disability shall attach to any person in regard to rights of property by reason of the religious opinions which he holds.

'Article XVII.—The British Resident will receive from the Government of the Transvaal State such assistance and support as can by law be given to him for the due discharge of his functions. He will also receive every assistance for the proper care and preservation of the graves of such of Her Majesty's forces as have died in the Transvaal, and if need be, for the appropriation of land for the purpose.

'Article XVIII.—The following will be the duties and functions of the British Resident:—1. He will perform duties and functions analogous to those discharged by a Charge d'Affaires and Consul-General. 2. In regard to natives within the Transvaal State, he will (*a*) report to the High Commissioner, as representative of the Suzerain, as to the working and observance of the provisions of this

Convention; (*b*) report to the Transvaal authorities any cases of ill-treatment of natives, or attempts to incite natives to rebellion, that may come to his knowledge; (*c*) use his influence with the natives in favour of law and order; and (*d*) generally perform such other duties as are by this Convention entrusted to him, and take such steps for the protection of such persons and property of natives as are consistent with the laws of the land. 3. In regard to natives not residing in the Transvaal, (*a*) he will report to the High Commissioner and the Transvaal Government any encroachments reported to him as having been made by Transvaal residents upon the land of such natives, and in case of disagreement between the Transvaal Government and the British Resident as to whether an encroachment has been made, the decision of the Suzerain will be final; (*b*) the British Resident will be the medium of communication with native chiefs outside the Transvaal, and, subject to the approval of the High Commissioner, as representing the Suzerain, he will control the conclusion of treaties with them; and (*c*) he will arbitrate upon every dispute between Transvaal residents and natives outside the Transvaal (as to acts committed beyond the boundaries of the Transvaal) which may be referred to him by the parties interested. 4. In regard to communications with foreign Powers, the Transvaal Government will correspond with Her Majesty's Government through the British Resident and the High Commissioner.

'Article XIX.—The Government of the Transvaal State will strictly adhere to the boundaries defined in the first article of the Convention, and will do its utmost to prevent any of its inhabitants from working any encroachment upon lands beyond the said State. The Royal Commission will forthwith appoint a person who will beacon off the boundary line between Ramatlabana and the point where such line first touches the Griqualand West boundary, ending between the Vaal and Hart Rivers. The person so appointed will be instructed to make an arrangement between the owners of the farms (Groot Fontein and Valley Fontein) on the one hand, and the Baralong authorities on the other, by which a fair share of the water supply of the said farms shall be allowed to flow undisturbed to the said Baralongs.

'Article XX.—All grants or titles issued at any time by the Transvaal Government in respect of and outside the boundary of the Transvaal State, as defined in Article I., shall be considered invalid and of no effect, except in so far as any such grant or title relates to land that falls within the boundary of the Transvaal State, and all persons holding any such grant so considered invalid and of no effect will receive from the Government of the Transvaal State such compensation, either in land or in money, as the Volksraad shall determine. In all cases in which any native chiefs or other authorities outside the said boundaries have received any adequate compensation from the Government of the former South African Republic for land excluded from the Transvaal by the first article of this Convention, or where permanent improvements have been made on the land, the British Resident will, subject to the approval of the High Commissioner, use his influence to recover from the native authorities fair compensation for the loss of the land thus excluded, or of the permanent improvements thereon.

'Article XXI.—Forthwith after the taking effect of this Convention, a Native Location Commission will be constituted, consisting of the President (or in his absence the Vice-President) of the State, or some one deputed by him, the Resident, or some one deputed by him, and a third person to be agreed upon by the President, or the Vice-President, as the case may be, and the President and such Commission will be a standing body for the performance of the duties hereinafter mentioned.

'Article XXII.—The Native Location Commission will reserve to the native tribes of the State such locations as they may be fairly and equitably entitled to, due regard being had to the actual occupation of such tribes. The Native Location Commission will clearly define the boundaries of such location, and for that purpose will in every instance first of all ascertain the minds of the parties interested in such land. In case land already granted in individual titles shall be required for the purpose of any location, the owners will receive such compensation either in other land or in money, as the Volksraad shall determine. After the boundaries of any location have been fixed, no fresh grant of land within such location will be made, nor will the boundaries be altered without the consent of the Location Commission. No fresh grants of land will be made in the districts of Waterberg, Zoutpansberg, and Leydenburg until the locations in the said districts respectively shall have been defined by the said Commission.

'Article XXIII.—If not released before the taking effect of this Convention, Secocoeni and those of his followers who have been imprisoned with him will be forthwith released, and the boundaries of their location will be defined by the Native Location Commission in the manner indicated in the last preceding article.

'Article XXIV.—The independence of the Swazies within the boundary line of Swaziland, as indicated in the first article of this Convention, will be fully recognised.

'Article XXV.—No other or higher duties will be imposed on the importation into the Transvaal State of any article the produce or manufacture of the dominions and possessions of Her Majesty, from whatever place arriving, than are or may be payable on the like article, the produce or manufacture of any other country. Nor will any prohibition be maintained or imposed on the importation of any article the produce or manufacture of the dominions and possessions of Her Majesty, which shall not equally extend to the importation of the like articles being the produce or manufacture of any other country.

'Article XXVI.—All persons other than natives conforming themselves to the laws of the Transvaal State (*a*) will have full liberty, with their families, to enter, travel, or reside in any part of the Transvaal State; (*b*) they will be entitled to hire or possess houses, manufactories, warehouses, shops, and premises; (*c*) they may carry on their commerce either in person or by any agents whom they may think fit to employ; (*d*) they will not be subject in respect of their persons or property, or in respect of their commerce or industry, to any taxes, whether general or local, other than those which are, or may be, imposed upon Transvaal citizens.

'Article XXVII.—All inhabitants of the Transvaal shall have free access to the courts of justice for the prosecution and defence of their rights.

'Article XXVIII.—All persons other than natives who established their domicile in the Transvaal between the 12th day of April 1877 and the date when this Convention comes into effect, and who shall, within twelve months after such last-mentioned date, have their names registered by the British Resident, shall be exempt from all compulsory military service whatever. The Resident shall notify such registrations to the Government of the Transvaal State.

'Article XXIX.—Provisions shall, hereafter, be made by a special instrument for the mutual extradition of criminals, and also or the surrender of deserters from Her Majesty's forces.

'Article XXX.—All debts contracted since the annexation will be payable in the same currency in which they may have been contracted. All uncancelled postages and other revenue stamps issued by the Government since the annexation will remain valid, and will be accepted, at their present value, by the future Government of the State. All licences duly issued since the annexation will remain in force during the period for which they have been issued.

'Article XXXI.—No grants of land which may have been made, and no transfers or mortgages which may have been passed since the time of the annexation, will be invalidated by reason merely of their having been made or passed after such date. All transfers to the British Secretary for Native Affairs in trust for natives will remain in force, the Native Location Commission taking the place of such Secretary for Native Affairs.

'Article XXXII.—This Convention will be ratified by a newly-elected Volksraad within the period of three months after its execution, and in default of such ratification this Convention shall be null and void.

'Article XXXIII.—Forthwith after the ratification of this Convention, as in the last preceding article mentioned, all British troops in the Transvaal territory will leave the same, and the mutual delivery of munitions of war will be carried out.

'Signed at Pretoria this 3d day of August 1881.

'HERCULES ROBINSON,
'EVELYN WOOD, } Royal Commissioners.
'H. DE VILLIERS,

'We, the undersigned, Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, Marthinus Wessel Pretorius, and Petrus Jacobus Joubert, as representatives of the Transvaal Burghers, do hereby agree to all the above conditions, reservations, and limitations, under which self-government has been restored to the inhabitants of the Transvaal territory, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty, her heirs and successors; and we agree to accept the Government of the said territory, with all rights and obligations thereto appertaining, on the 8th day of August 1881; and we promise and undertake that this Convention shall be ratified by a newly-elected Volksraad of the Transvaal State within three months from date.

'Signed at Pretoria this 3rd day of August 1881.

'STEPHANUS JOHANNES PAULUS KRUGER.
'MARTHINUS WESSEL PRETORIUS.
'PETRUS JACOBUS JOUBERT.'

That the Royal Commissioners had decided upon £1,400,000 as the amount of compensation to be awarded to the loyals, and that the home Government struck off the million, was a report freely circulated, but one which I would not like to vouch for the accuracy of.

To say that the terms of the Convention did not give satisfaction to that section of the inhabitants is unnecessary. The day after the signing of the treaty, they received the following reply to a letter I have quoted already as addressed to the Commissioners:—

'GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PRETORIA, *August* 4, 1881.

'SIR,—With reference to your communication without date, to the Administrator, relative to the position of British subjects under the Transvaal State Government, in which you assert His Excellency the High Commissioner gave certain information to a deputation who made inquiries on the subject, I am directed to inform you the Administrator has shown your letter to Sir Hercules Robinson, who has desired him to state that the clause in the original draft of the Convention to which you refer certainly had a more extended application, but that the clause was modified as it now stands in consequence of direct instructions from the Imperial Government. The Administrator having no power in the matter, regrets that he is unable to meet your wishes.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

'F. FRASER, Major, Assistant Major-General.

'C. KIDWELL, Esq., Pretoria.'

That from the very first the terms gave dissatisfaction to every section of the Boers was made manifest, and petitions on their part addressed to the Volksraad were freely signed, containing amongst others these statements:—

'That certain clauses, to wit, Article 2 (*c*) and Article 18, clause 4, contain stipulations which will hamper the free action of the State, and retard its healthy development, and which will tend to give rise to complications and to disturb those relations of amity and concord which it is the first object of this Convention to promote and consolidate.

'Your petitioners therefore humbly pray, that your honourable

House will use the most strenuous efforts to obtain such revision of the said clauses as will secure the following objects:—

'1. The power of concluding commercial treaties with foreign countries.

'2. The power of appointing representatives at foreign Courts, a privilege which is accorded to the Negro Republic of Liberia, who have an accredited Minister at the Court of St. James.'

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE VOLKSRAAD AND ITS VERDICT—CONCLUSION.

WHEN the announcement was made subsequently by the Triumvirate that their signatures had been virtually wrung from them, the feeling of indignation amongst the Boers was, as may be imagined, in no wise allayed. But I will refer to this later on.

About 300 of the native chiefs of the Transvaal were summoned to Pretoria to receive formal instruction as to the manner in which their interests were to be protected. The clauses of the Convention affecting them were read to them in the presence of the Royal Commissioners and the Boer leaders, and they were also addressed in the following terms:—

'You have been called together to hear from us, the representatives of the Queen of England, what Her Majesty's Government has decided as to the future settlement of this country. You are aware that a little more than four years ago the Transvaal was annexed to the Queen's dominions. This was done because it was then believed that the majority of those who had a voice in the government of the country preferred British rule to the rule of those who were then in power. Subsequent events have shown that this belief was mistaken, and Her Majesty's Government, with that sense of justice which befits a great and powerful nation, gave orders that the country should be given back to its former rulers under certain conditions which have been framed by us, and agreed to by the representatives of the burghers. These representatives —Messrs. Kruger, Pretorius, and Joubert—I have now much pleasure in introducing to you. I regret that Mr. Kruger is absent through illness, but the other two gentlemen are present, and Mr. Joubert, I understand, is to be Secretary for Native Affairs. In the conditions to which, as I have said, they agree, your interests have not been overlooked. All existing laws will be maintained, and no future enactment which specially affects your interests will have any effect until the Queen has approved of it. I am anxious that you should clearly understand this here to-day, and realize that, although there will be a change in the form of government, your rights, as well as your duties, will undergo no alteration. You will be allowed to buy or otherwise acquire land, but the transfer will be registered in trust for you in the names of three gentlemen, who will constitute a Native Location Commission. This Commission will mark out native locations, which the great native tribes may peacefully occupy. In marking out these locations, existing rights will be carefully guarded, and the Transvaal Government on the one hand, and the native tribes on the other, will always have to respect the boundaries as defined; in the same way the different tribes will have to respect each other's locations, and when this is not done, the injured tribe will have to lay their complaints before the Government of the country.

'In giving back the country to the burghers, the Queen has reserved to herself the right to appoint a British Resident here, and it will be one of this officer's special duties to see that the provisions of the Convention in your favour are carried out. I am glad to have this opportunity to-day of presenting to you another gentleman, Mr. Hudson, who has been selected to fill the important post, and of committing you all to his care. I must warn you, however, against supposing that he is to be the ruler of the country. The Government will be the rulers of the country, but the Resident will keep them informed whenever he ascertains that natives have been ill-treated, or whenever any attempt is made to incite them to rebellion. He will, at the same time, be ever ready to assist you with his advice, and I feel assured that such advice will always be in favour of law and order. The different courts of law will, as now, be opened to hear your complaints and to redress your grievances, and I am convinced that you will never have reason to complain to the Resident that the doors of justice have been closed to you. Remember that you will be expected to be a law-abiding people, and that no man will be allowed to take the law into his own hands. You will do well to turn a deaf ear to mischief-makers, whether they be Dutch, or English, or natives who may endeavour to lead you astray. If you require protection from your enemies, you should look to the Government of the country, to whom your taxes, such as the hut tax, will be paid, and whose bounden duty, therefore, it will be to afford you protection. We have made, as I have observed, an agreement with the representatives of the burghers for the settlement of the country; and if you wish for more full information as to what your rights are under that agreement, the Resident will always be able and willing to give you the information you may desire.

'Two more points, however, I will mention to you to-day. One is the provision that there is to be no slavery, or anything approaching to slavery. This provision existed in a former Convention, and the Transvaal representatives have willingly consented that the same provision should again be affirmed, so that all men may know what the law of the country is on this subject; but you should remember that working for fair wages does not constitute slavery, and that you will never be raised above your present position until you have learned by experience that there is no disgrace in honest labour, whether performed by men or women. The other point is that you will be allowed to move freely within the country, or to leave it for the purpose of seeking employment elsewhere, or for all other lawful purposes. It will be necessary, however, to retain the existing law relating to passes, so that good order may be maintained throughout the country. What the Transvaal now wants is industry, unity, and peace. If the inhabitants, whether white or coloured, will, each in his own sphere, do the work he is fitted for,—if they will unite in promoting the good of the country, and, forgetting all past differences and quarrels, will maintain peace and harmony amongst each other,—this country has assuredly before it a bright and prosperous future. The Queen of England desires the good of you all, and you may rest assured that, although this country is about to be handed back to its former rulers, your interests will never be forgotten or neglected by Her Majesty's Government, or by her representatives in South Africa. You will now return peacefully to your homes, and acquaint all your friends with the words which I have spoken to you to-day.'

The natives were not allowed to offer any opinion on this matter whilst in audience, but amongst themselves they reasoned; 'England says she is a strong country, and gives back the country to the Boers because it belongs to them. Natives say the country is not the Boers,' but theirs, their forefathers having found and occupied the land long before the Boers came.' Add to these arguments the one that naturally would present itself to the mind of the Zulus on hearing that Secocoeni was to be released, and one can imagine that dissatisfaction and discontent are very mild terms to apply to the feeling of the black population in and around the Transvaal. If Secocoeni is entitled to freedom, then Cetewayo is entitled to the same amount of liberty. But Cetewayo had to wait for liberation.

On the 8th August the hoisting of the Republican flag took place at Pretoria, with a little attendant ceremony, including the reading of a proclamation in the following terms :—

'On the 8th day of August 1881, the country has again reverted to our Government. This happened after the signing of a Convention, on the 3d August, between the representatives of the Royal Commission and the members of the Triumvirate, which Convention will be laid before the Volksraad and made public. With the greatest gratitude to our God we communicate this to all inhabitants. Now is the time for us all to prove the strength of our country, and through unity to make power.

'We thank all the burghers for their zeal and obedience, and trust they will now also, without delay, strengthen our hands. We expect that all inhabitants will at once pay their taxes, in order that the country may be fairly ruled.

'To all inhabitants, without exception, we promise the protection of the law, and all the privileges attendant thereon.

'To inhabitants who are not burghers, and do not wish to become such, we notify that they have the right to report themselves to the Resident as British subjects, according to Article 28 of the now settled Convention. But be it known to all, that all ordinary rights of property, trade, and usages will still be accorded to every one, Burgher or not.

'We repeat solemnly that our motto is "Unity and Reconciliation," our liberty is "Law and Order."

'S. J. P. KRUGER, Vice-President.
'M. W. PRETORIUS, } Members of
'P. J. JOUBERT, } Triumvirate.
'W. EDWARD BOK, State Secretary.

'PRETORIA, *8th August* 1881.'

Joubert, in the absence of Kruger, who was ill, also addressed the assembly in the ordinary pious strain. Pointing to the flag, he asked every one to respect it; under it full protection would be given to every one, 'whether burgher, foreigner, or Kaffir. Law and order, right and justice, was their motto.'

An extraordinary session of the Volksraad, convened for the 18th August, was held on that date at Pretoria for the purposes expressed in the following speech, delivered by Paul Kruger, the Vice-President:—

'HONOURABLE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE VOLKSRAAD,—1. I have summoned you, as representatives of the people, for the purpose of informing you that a Convention relative to the restoration of the country has been signed by the Royal Commission, appointed by the Government of Her Majesty the Queen of England, and by us, the Triumvirate elected by you at Paardekraal, in accordance with the Commission given us at the special session of the Volksraad at Heidelberg on the 15th April last.

'2. Seeing that it is my earnest wish and desire that the several districts shall be fully represented at the confirmation of the said Convention, and seeing that, in consequence of the circumstances in which the country has now for more than four years been placed, many districts are not fully represented, and some are wholly unrepresented, I therefore request you, by the opening of a new election for members of the Volksraad, to enable me to lay the Convention for confirmation before a fully-constituted Volksraad, and to obtain its direction as to the future concerns of the country.

'3. I request you to appoint this election within the shortest possible time, so that a special session of the Volksraad may be held during the month of September next.

'4. May Almighty God bless your deliberations.'

The Chairman replied:—

'HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE TRIUMVIRATE,—We heartily welcome you in our midst, and are more particularly delighted to see amongst us again our Vice-President, who has been confined to a bed of illness during the last few days. We are filled with extreme gratitude that Providence has spared your valuable life, so as to enable us to learn through you from the Triumvirate that the commission entrusted to them in our last sitting at Heidelberg has been executed so far, and that our God has blessed your endeavours, so that you are prepared to lay before the people, for ratification, a Convention by which the people's independence and freedom have been restored. We appreciate it highly, and agree with your Honours that this Convention should be made known to the whole people for the purpose of being ratified thereafter, as soon as possible; and we therefore consider your proposals, so that, in accordance with the existing laws of the country, the burghers of the country should, at the next ensuing extraordinary session of the Volksraad, be properly and, if possible, fully represented, and to accomplish the work which will then be submitted to them by your Honours.'

The Executive were duly authorized to open an election for members, the 15th September being fixed as the date for the close of the election term.

Meanwhile there occurred at Potchefstrom an incident which did not augur well for the future government of the Boers by their leaders. The Executive appointed to the magistracy of Potchefstrom a gentleman who did not happen to be the man whom the people there desired as their magistrate: when this gentlemen, duly armed with his credentials, presented himself to take charge of the office, a number of armed Boers guarding the door refused to let him act. Joubert, on hearing this, immediately went in post haste to Potchefstrom, and insisted upon the nominee of the Government being installed in the office. By a display of firmness, Joubert gained his point, and nothing further came of the matter.

The first election in the Transvaal State gave the following return of members:—

District of Pretoria—F. Joubert, H. P. Pretorius, P. G. Ross.

City of Pretoria—J. C. Preller.

District of Potchefstrom—C. J. Bodenstein, H. Lemmer, P. A. Cronjé.

Dorp of Potchefstrom—J. van Eck.

District of Rustenburg—J. H. Fouché, J. M. van Rooyen, J. Malan.

Dorp of Rustenburg—G. Strock.

District of Leydenburg—C. J. Coetzee, G. S. Maré, A. A. D. Blaauw.

Dorp of Leydenburg—J. J. Lombaard.

District of Utrecht—J. Birkenstock, J. J. Spies, T. G. Stenekamp.

District of Wakkerstroom—C. F. Laubeschagne, A. A. Stoop, G. Visagie.

District of Waterberg—C. C. van Heerden, H. J. Smit.

District of Bloemhof—H. Kok, J. Minnaar, G. Niekerk, G. Niemand.

District of Middleburg—J. H. Coetzee, S. P. Botha, Nicolaas Smit.

District of Heidelberg—G. D. van der Heven, J. D. Weibach, C. L. Neethling.

District of Standerton—J. P. Taljaard, J. P. Otto.

District of Marico—P. J. van Staden, C. Botts, N. C. Grey.

District of Zoutpansberg—J. F. Roos, H. F. Smit, P. C. Smit.

Of legislation in the *interim*, a proclamation issued in the *Government Gazette* is worth reproducing as translated into English :—

'Whereas it is necessary to oppose vagabondage, or vagrancy, or public outrage of morals:

'Be it therefore enacted and decreed by the State President represented by the most noble Triumvirate, that—

'1. Vagrancy is a crime.

'2. By vagrants, or rabble, is understood those persons who have no fixed dwelling-place, or means of existence, and who are not in the habit of exercising any handicraft or calling.

'3. Persons legally declared vagrants or rabble, shall be punished by imprisonment, not exceeding six months, with or without hard labour.

'4. In the case of persons convicted as vagrants, being foreigners, they will be taken across the frontier at the expense of the Government.

'5. All persons convicted of a public violation of, or offence against morality, shall be punished by fine or imprisonment with hard labour, not exceeding six months.

'6. The prescriptions of the criminal procedure relating to criminal prosecutions shall be followed in prosecuting the crimes named in this law.

'7. Subject to the ratification of the Most Honourable Volksraad, this law shall commence and take effect from the date of its publication in the *Government Gazette.*

'The State President represented by the most noble Triumvirate, in the name of these—

'S. J. P. KRUGER, Vice-President.
'W. E. BOK, State Secretary.

'GOVERNMENT HOUSE, PRETORIA, *September* 13, 1881.'

On the 21st September the Volksraad met, when it was anticipated the opening speech of Mr. Kruger would be delivered. On that day it appeared in the columns of a special edition of Mr. Cellier's paper the *Volksstem*, at noon, as having just been uttered,—a rather amusing circumstance, seeing that it was not till the second day of the meeting of the Raad that Mr. Kruger unburdened himself to this effect:—

'MR. PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE THE VOLKSRAAD,—It is with a feeling of inexpressible gratitude to God the Creator of all things, that we, at this special moment, may again welcome you here in this building, and see you assembled to discuss the interests of our dearly beloved Fatherland.

'Those interests, gentlemen, are undoubtedly very important, and will require your undivided attention and utmost exertion.

'We are, however, assured that God, who has thus far visibly led us, will not withhold from you His support and assistance, but will accomplish the work of His hands.

'1. The Commission entrusted to us by you at Paardenkraal in December last to exert all means which could lead to the restoration of the independence of the country, the subsequent exertions of all burghers of the country without distinction, the preliminary conditions of peace entered into at Laing's Nek between the Delegates of Her Majesty's British Government and our Government, the extraordinary session of the Honourable the Volksraad held at Heidelberg, the negotiations with the Royal Commission appointed by the English Government,—all this, gentlemen, has led to the conclusion of a Convention, upon which the Honourable the Volksraad was convened on the 10th of August last, solely for the purpose of opening an election, upon which your Honours have been elected, and which Convention we submit to you, and by which we have taken upon ourselves the obligation of laying it before you for ratification.

'We cannot flatter ourselves with the hope that the Convention will satisfy you in its various provisions—it has not satisfied ourselves—but we venture to give you this assurance, that we signed it under the conviction that, under the circumstances, sincere love for our Fatherland and solicitude in the welfare of South Africa demanded from us not to withhold our signatures from this Convention.

'We publish in our *Staats Courant*, verbally, as much as possible everything that has been uttered and that has happened between the members of the Royal Commission and the Honourable Triumvirate and members of the Transvaal Commission, from which you will see that we left nothing untried on our side to obtain those modifications in the Convention which appeared desirable to us.

'We are, however, convinced that many, if not all the remarks advanced by us, will appear later on to have been well founded, and that the British Government itself will have to propose modifications and changes in the Convention.

'2. It is our duty to remind you of the great amount of sympathy which we experienced from all sides during the late struggle, from our brethren and co-religionists in the Orange Free State, Natal, and the Cape Colony, as well as from Europe and America, not excluding the noble English nation.

'This interest has evinced itself also in deeds. Excepting from the Orange Free State, Natal, and the Cape Colony, important gifts have been received for the alleviation of the needs of our wounded and of the widows and orphans, and generally in support of our good cause, being gifts forwarded to us from Holland, Germany, and France.

'3. When at Paardenkraal the Government undertook its important task, the people bound themselves to it by a solemn oath. This oath they have faithfully observed, and the unanimity of the people became the strength of the country. Some fifty of our burghers have sacrificed their lives, and we stand by their graves with grief and gratitude. Many other burghers have paid in wounds for their patriotism. Government has provisionally appointed a Commission to make permanent provision for the widows and orphans of the burghers killed, and for the families of the wounded. We will be glad of your co-operation in further regulating this matter.

'A great struggle for a good cause bears good fruits, and it is a pleasant task to us to refer you to the eminent spirit of invention showed by our burgher, Mr. Ras, in the manufacture of two good guns, as also to the successful exertions of some of our burghers, who have succeeded in manufacturing cartridges and gunpowder. Without anticipating your decision, we think these men are entitled to public recognition at your hands.

'4. Two estimates will be submitted to your Assembly, one to the end of December next, and one for the financial year of 1882–1883.

'Extraordinary circumstances demand extraordinary measures. The special expenses incurred by us for the war, in which many of our burghers have already come to our assistance, the expenses in consequence of the Convention, the payment of the old vested debt, the deficit in the Orphan Chamber, urge us to lay before you special proposals, and in particular to ask your sanction for a modification of the system of taxation, which will more fairly and proportionately divide the burdens among the burghers. We are prepared to lay before you everything for the further elucidation of these financial matters.

'5. We further recommend to you to empower the Government to grant certain monopolies, by which the industry of the country will be materially promoted. The manufacturing of articles for which this country itself possesses the finest materials, and which had hitherto to be imported at great expense from elsewhere, is a question of vital importance for the welfare of the State, as is also the better exploration of the mines.

'Closely connected with this is the offer of premiums to inventors or manufacturers of requisites which have hitherto been imported from abroad, for which the Government requests your authority.

'6. The circumstances of the country have compelled us to grant to many burghers of the country, exemption from the fine imposed on the payment of Government dues. For this we solicit your approval.

'7. With regard to the Supreme Court, we request you to adopt measures in order to enable us to appoint competent persons as Puisne Judges.

'8. The Government has decided, in abeyance of your approval, to establish a corps, destined to become the nucleus of select artillerists, composed of sons of the soil.

'9. In submitting to you the list of officials preliminarily appointed by us, we have to point out to you that the term of office of C. J. Joubert, Esq., member of the Honourable the Executive Council, has terminated, and that in this matter provision will have to be made during this session.

'We also look to your Honourable House for a provision of the salary of the Honourable the Triumvirate and the members of the Executive Council.

'10. We have earnestly regarded the state of education in the whole country, which we have taken greatly to heart. We have considered that we have taken the first step in a better direction by appointing a very eminent gentleman, the Rev. S. J. du Toit, of the Paarl. We recommend this subject to your attention with the utmost earnestness.

'11. Several other matters of greater or less importance will be laid before you during this session.

'Gentlemen, we now lay in your hands the happiness of the country, with full reliance on your collective co-operation and the blessing of the God of our fathers.

'May the Lord bless your deliberations.'

The reference in this speech to the terms of the Convention, again raised the hopes of those who would gladly have seen the Boer representatives refuse to ratify the document; and that hope was sustained almost to the last moment, in consequence of the unmeasured terms in which the Convention was condemned by the Boer Parliament throughout the debate on its several articles. From the Triumvirate the Volksraad requested full particulars as to their interviews with Sir Evelyn Wood and their subsequent contentions before the Royal Commission. This information was readily given, and then it transpired that the Triumvirate had only assented to the terms of the Convention to avoid further bloodshed, and not because the Convention was consonant with their ideas of right and justice. Of the long debate that ensued, I only give a few brief extracts to show the feeling of one and all :—

'Mr. Spies expressed himself in strong terms against the injustice of the Convention. He dared not say that the Triumvirate had betrayed the people.

'Memorial was presented from Rietfontein, District Heidelberg, dated 23rd April 1881, signed by Van der Heven and thirty others, against parting with any territory. Mr. Van der Heven stated that if he dared to approve of the Convention, his constituents would stone him to death.

'Mr. P. A. Cronje thought that the Convention should be ratified, or rejected in its entirety, before discussing the same clause by clause. He looked on the Sand River Convention as a defunct matter.

'Mr. Henning Pretorius could not agree with Mr. Cronje as regards the Sand River Convention. He and his father had fought for it. It existed still. He could not accept the present Convention. A Kaffir had more liberty than the burghers.

'Mr. J P. Otto stated that he had been distinctly forbidden by his constituents to ratify the Convention.

'Mr. Fouchê stated that the Convention was in direct conflict with the peace negotiations. It seemed as if the burghers were the losing party. Mr. Pretorius had truly remarked that a Kaffir has more liberty. If he agreed to it, it would be under compulsion.

'Mr. Taljaard said he fully concurred in the opinions expressed by Mr. Spies.

'Mr. Neethling remarked that Mr. Spies had fully expressed his (speaker's) views. He was against the Convention.

'Mr. Otto likewise declared himself against accepting clause 1 of the Convention.

'Mr. Preller said: If we rejected the Convention, we should forfeit the moral support and sympathy of European nations. Would it not be better to suggest modifications to the British Government?

'Mr. Laubeschagne stated that clause 1 speaks of boundary lines being beaconed off. A portion of the former territory of the South African Republic had been cut off. He is opposed to the ratification of the Convention. The Sand River Convention was still in force, and by virtue thereof the Raad sat that day.

'Mr. Lemmer agrees with the last speaker. He cannot accept the document on the table as a Convention. The burghers will not consent to part with any territory.

'Mr. Roos also expressed himself in strong terms against ratifying the Convention.

'Mr. Van der Heven stated that he had been present at three different meetings of the burghers, and only one person was in favour of the Convention. Many Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Germans were opposed to it.

'Mr. Birkenstock said that the Convention was more like a Russian ukase than a Convention. He, however, thought it would be better to discuss it clause by clause.

'Mr. Malan was opposed to the Convention, but thought it better to discuss it. He did not blame the Triumvirate.

'Mr. Taljaard said that the change of name (Transvaal State) had greatly provoked him. He could not approve of clause 1.

'Mr. Spies said that clause 1 was pernicious for the district of Utrecht. He could not agree to it.

'Mr. Visagie said that it was not possible to adopt clause 1.'

If Articles I. and II. gave dissatisfaction, Article X. was no less distasteful.

Article XII.—'Mr. Van der Heven asks whether it is just that when their flesh and blood voluntarily went over to the British side to shed blood, they should be pardoned. No country and power would allow it. His constituents are dead against it.

'Mr. Pretorius would agree with Mr. Van der Heven, but the Boers have lost their chance.

'Mr. Taljaard is obliged to submit, because it has been agreed to. He is, however, against the article.'

Article XIII.—'Mr. Otto is against this article conscientiously, and states his reasons for calling it unjust.

'Mr. P. Joubert explains that in substance this is no new provision for the natives. It was the same in substance under the old Republic, although in a different form.

'The Vice-President, Hon. P. Joubert, and the chairman severally explain their views on this article.

'Mr. Lemmer is ashamed to speak again of this document. Regards this document as a child without a father.

'Mr. H. Joubert said that if he had the power, he would reject the Article XIII., because it placed the natives on an equal footing with the whites.

'Mr. P. A. Cronje asks for information. He finds that within the Republic Kaffir locations must be beaconed off. If they are obliged to give ground to Kaffirs inside the Republic, why do their burghers outside the Republic not get ground?

'Vice-President Kruger says, those who are outside are beyond Boer law. This does not bear on the case.

'Hon. P. Joubert also explains to the same effect. The law must protect the natives as well as the Burghers. There cannot be one-sided legislation.'

Article XV.—'The provision of Article IV., Sand River Convention, confirmed, as regards the prohibition of slavery, or apprenticeship resembling slavery.'

Mr. Van der Heven is against Article XV. of Convention.

'Hon. P. Joubert says that simply prejudice against the Convention caused the remarks of the last speaker.

'The Chairman feels bound to endorse Mr. Van der Heven's views. The Hon. P. Joubert did not understand him properly; Mr. Van der Heven simply meant that because one article of Sand River Convention is referred to alone, the inference is that the rest has lapsed.

'Vice-President Kruger is also of opinion that this was Mr. Van der Heven's meaning.

'Mr. Fouché cannot see why the British Government should revive one of the articles of Sand River Convention and not the whole.

'Mr. Taljaard is against Article XV.

'Mr. Birkenstock thinks Article XV. superfluous. There is no slavery here.

'Vice-President Kruger says there has never been slavery here. The British Government did what was almost tantamount to slavery by separating, when apprenticed, children from their parents at the Diamond Fields.

'The Chairman confirms this by his own personal experience.

'Mr. Neethling: Article IV. of Sand River Convention has never been—with consent of our Government—transferred, notwithstanding the writings of a certain Mr. Gideon Steyn, years ago, to that effect.

'Frans. Joubert: Two days since I swore to maintain the independence of the Republic. It is impossible for me to confirm the Convention as it now stands. I am not speaking for myself alone, for I can go to Damaraland if my freedom is signed away; but I speak for the widows and orphans, for those who are reduced to poverty by the war, and are to be deprived of their land for the benefit of others who have no right to it. This is called a Convention, a term which I understand applies to a mutual agreement; but this document represents nothing more than terms dictated by a conqueror to barbarous and untrustworthy subjects. It endorses every calumny which drove us to desperation, and reduces us to a condition worse than before. We took up arms in defence of our liberties and good name. We want to be the friend of England, and England to be our friend. These terms open up every wound of the past, instead of, as we hoped, closing them for ever. We have no desire to throw off the suzerainty, for we look to England to be the protector of our liberties and of our defence against foreign invasion, but it must be within limits dictated by justice. If the Sand River Convention can thus be set aside, what is the value of this one? England has hitherto mistrusted us because she has been the victim of false information. When we asked for an inquiry or for a representative, it has been refused us. She now has a Resident who can inform her of what occurs, and who can exercise legitimate influence on our Councils without setting class against class or destroying the authority of our Government.'

Article XVIII. is read, consisting of paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4.

'Mr. Birkenstock says that, according to the Convention, the Suzerain had too great a power. In this Republic, for instance, according to the Convention, there was an *imperium in imperio* which cannot exist.'

Paragraph 3 under discussion.

'Mr. Minnaar entirely concurs with the article; England thought to bind the Boers fast, but it has bound itself fast.

'The Chairman sees danger in paragraph 3, and points out how it may lead to complications with native tribes.

'Mr. Van der Heven agrees entirely with the Chairman

'Mr. Birkenstock is sorry to say that the Annexation Proclamation gave more privileges than this Convention.

'Mr. Minnaar says that Mr. Birkenstock is so far right, but the Annexation promises were never carried out.'

Paragraph 4 under discussion (correspondence with Foreign Powers to go through British Resident and High Commissioner).

'Memorial read from Pretoria and other parts of district against the adoption of paragraph 3 of Article XVIII.

'Mr. Spies is much surprised at such limitations emanating from the Royal Commission. He expressed himself strongly against it.

'Mr. Van der Heven said it was too humiliating for them to accept.

'Mr. Van Heerden is also against this paragraph.

'Mr. Birkenstock asked what had they got in the way of liberty? The Cape Colony got liberty without bloodshed.

'Mr. Taljaard said that Article XVIII. was not only shameful, but pernicious to their best interests. Expressed his thorough disgust with the Convention.

The Chairman: This shows why our country was annexed, not because of our "inherent weakness." It was because England was afraid she would lose the profit of our annexation if we concluded treaties with foreign powers.'

Article XIX.—'Mr. Neethling: That article is a reflection on the burghers which they have never deserved.

'Mr. P. A. Cronje thinks that if they have to give so much ground for Kaffir locations, their burghers ought to be provided for out of the thousands of morgen of ground which fall outside the Republic.'

Article XX.—'Mr. Spies objects to this article, because he does not know where the money is to come from.

'Mr. Taljaard concurs with the former speaker in every particular, and adds that the Kaffir is always more privileged than Boers are.

'Mr. Birkenstock: Firstly, this article will increase our State debt; and secondly, place us at the mercy of the Kaffirs.

'Mr. Otto refers again to injustice shown the burghers, as evidenced by this very article. The Kaffirs are more privileged than Boers.

'Mr. Minnaar can never acknowledge the right of any judge or Government to confiscate ground.

'Mr. Birkenstock said if England would do justice, since she conquered the whole of Zululand, she might have allowed the boundary line of 1864.'

Article XXII.—'Mr. Birkenstock expresses his regrets that whilst poor Irishmen are rejected from their homes by the English Government, provision is made for the Kaffirs here.

'Mr. D. Taljaard is against the provisions of this article.

'Mr. Spies says if he understands the article correctly, Utrecht will be a Kaffir location, and that natives are everywhere preferred to Boers.

'Mr. Frans Joubert is of opinion that England will pay compensation in ground for the natives.

'Mr. Minnaar understands that the Government of the South African Repulic must pay for it.

'Mr. C. J. Joubert (member of the Executive) explains that the Volksraad will not have to pay compensation, but as a Committee will merely have to decide what compensation has to be given.

'The Chairman is of opinion that the article will not bear the construction put on it by the Hon. C. J. Joubert.'

Article XXIV.—'Mr. Spies inquires whether the Swazies wished to sever their connection with the South African Republic.

'Mr. P. Kruger said, so far as he knew, not.

'The Hon. P. Joubert explained that England's policy, not her partiality for natives, dictated her course of action. It was wrong to reflect on the Royal Commission in the way some members did.

'Mr. C. J. Joubert says it is England's policy to have a railway through Zululand.'

Article XXVI.—'Mr. Taljaard: Why is this article in the Convention? Merely to reproach us—to endeavour to show us to the world that we were never free before. I disapprove of the article, because it is shameful, not useful.

'Mr. Birkenstock: I think the article is insulting. It is merely inserted to reassure the loyals.

'Mr. P. A. Cronje also expresses himself against it.

'Mr. Van der Heven is of opinion that the article is to protect foreigners who hereafter come into the country.

'Mr. P. Joubert explains what is meant by this article. The privileges of such persons are limited by this article. It is a reproach to the loyals.

'Mr. J. Joubert (member of Executive): This article is capable of several interpretations. The Royal Commission wish to have honest people here, not bundle-carriers.

'Mr. Taljaard declares himself against the adoption of this article.

'Mr. Otto approves of the article as a whole, but there is an insult and a reproach conveyed to them in covered words.

'Mr. Laubeschagne entirely concurs with Mr. Otto.

'The Chairman agrees with the last speaker.

'Mr. Birkenstock does not agree with the explanations given by Mr. Joubert.

'Mr. Spies concurs with the last speaker. Article XXVI. is one of the most wretched articles framed.

'Mr. Fouché thought that the Royal Commission could not have known what they were about in framing this article. The article is superfluous.

'Mr. V. P. Kruger: There is but one interpretation. I should say there is a limitation. The Royal Commission meant only to protect the loyals.

'Mr. F. Joubert: Mention is made of Article VI. of the Grondwet, but it can be altered. The British Government provides for the future. "There must be no alteration in the Grondwet," says England regarding this power.

'Mr. V. P. Kruger does not share this view of the matter and lucidly gives his reasons.

'The Chairman: If no subsequent article should appear, it would perhaps be good. He asked the Raad whose opinion should be taken—the legislators' opinion (the law-givers), or that of the exponent or interpreter thereof.

'Mr. V. P. Kruger replies: Mr. Otto does not see what right the Royal Commission had to dictate such an article. We have autonomy as regards white people—why then should we be thus bound down?

'Hon. P. Joubert considers it inserted by the British Government as an expedient to satisfy the loyals and all outsiders. He considers the article superfluous. It is to conciliate "Jingodom." Article VI. of Constitution (Grondwet) makes ample provision for what is contemplated here.

'Mr. H. Joubert says the Jingoes will at once say, if this article is approved of, "Here is a proof that we should otherwise have been in danger, else why did you adopt such a clause in the Convention?"

'Mr. Spies expresses himself strongly against the adoption of this article.'

Article XXVII.—'Mr. C. L. Neethling: I can only say that insult follows insult.

'Mr. Birkenstock: By adopting this article, we admit that justice was not meted out to all equally before the annexation. It is more respectful than any other article. Article XXVIII. of Convention agrees with this, that all persons who came here since the annexation, can within a year declare themselves British subjects, to escape military service (commandeering); the question is asked whether such persons can be called upon to contribute in money?

'Hon. P. Joubert is of opinion that such persons can be called upon to contribute towards payment of war expenses.

'Mr. Birkenstock asks for the opinion of the Attorney-General.

'Dr. Jorissen says that the Hon. P. Joubert has given the true explanation. The Government of the South African Republic has clearly a right to demand from such persons contributions in money or in kind.

'The Hon. Vice-President gives similar ideas of what the only construction of this article can be.

'Mr. J. C. Preller says there can be only one interpretation of "forced military service." It alludes to personal service only.

'Mr. J. P. Otto gives his interpretation.

'Mr. Lemmer: We struggle every day to explain this document, but we shall never succeed. I could almost swear to it. All inhabitants, without exception, must contribute towards war expenses.

'Mr. H. Pretorius is of opinion that this is the only just article in the Convention.

'Mr. Roos does not agree with the last speaker; is against the Convention from beginning to end.

'Hon. P. Joubert: The Government concurs with what has been said by Mr. Pretorius. Those who come after the annexation should not be placed on the same footing as those who lived in the country before the annexation, and know to what government and laws they had to subject themselves; he is of opinion that the said articles are in the interest of the country.'

Article XXXI.—'Mr. Birkenstock: This article has two clauses; the first speaks for itself. Since the annexation hundreds of transfers and mortgages have taken place, and cannot be lawfully set aside; but as regards the second clause (transfer of ground on behalf of natives), what is contained in such transfers?

'The Hon. Vice-President Kruger gives the Raad the necessary information.

'Hon. P. Joubert, in reply to a question put, expressed himself in terms of strong indignation at the way in which the British Government had taken away a Kaffir location for the purpose of rewarding the family of the late Mr. Uys, for services rendered the British Government in the late Zulu war by the late Piet Uys. He called it a robbery and a theft. Not that he was against rewarding the services of the late Mr. Uys. It was the fulfilment of a solemn obligation. He objected only to the action of the British Government in carrying it out by acting with glaring injustice to the Republic.'

Several other speakers addressed the House in terms by no means favourable to the adoption of this article.

'Mr. Spies asks Government whether they are in possession of documents to prove that farms were given to Messrs. Combrinck and Brinck for services shown Colonel Wood (now General Sir Evelyn Wood) in former days, whereby his life was spared, otherwise he (Colonel Wood) would have gone to the moon. Was that honourable on the part of an honest man? Was such to be expected from Sir Evelyn Wood? He considered it a robbery committed against the Republic.

'Mr. Stoop does not allude to the grant made the family of the late Piet Uys, but speaks of the injustice done the Boers by the British Government in thus giving away their ground.

'Mr. Visagie objects to this article.

'Mr. Birkenstock informs the Raad that the provisions of compensation made by Sir Evelyn Wood to the family of the late Piet Uys were made by him in the capacity of a military officer, and not as a representative of Great Britain.

'Vice-President Kruger says that he was always led to believe that the family of the late Piet Uys should get ground in Zululand, where he fought and fell.

'Mr. Lemmer: The late Piet Uys was *Wood's* protector; that is why the family are rewarded by grants of land snatched away from us. He disapproves of the whole Convention. It is full of defects.'

Article XXXII.—'Mr. Neethling suggests for consideration the following proposal: The Volksraad wishes to know from the Government in what relation the country will stand towards Her Majesty's Government if the Convention be not approved of.

'The Chairman says in reply that the Volksraad has decided to pass no resolution until the Convention has been disposed of. The Convention had better be referred to a Committee of the whole House, assisted by some members of the Executive.

'Mr. Neethling explains what he means—that is, since they have only five weeks at their disposal, they ought to telegraph to England to know in what light their relations would be considered if the Convention be rejected.

'Mr. Lemmer does not coincide with the former speaker; he agrees with the hon. Chairman, but hopes never to see the Convention ratified.

'Hon. P. Joubert: Speaking of telegrams, the answer is in the article itself, that if not ratified, the Convention falls to the ground. The Volksraad, the lawful legislature of the country, is here to decide. If the Volksraad should, against his (the speaker's) expectations, reject the Convention, the Volksraad still exists. General Wood must know what he will do. He will never tell us.

'Mr. Neethling certainly meant, "What will be the political feeling of the British Government towards us in the event of the Convention being rejected?"

'Mr. Taljaard proposes to go into Committee of the whole House.

'Mr. Fouché is against article XXXII., and against the Convention altogether, but especially against this article, adding, "We know what the probable consequences will be to us if we reject the Convention, but still we cannot do otherwise."

'Mr. Preller says time is frittered away in discussions. Let them wait till the House forms itself into a Committee of the whole House. He proposes that progress be made.'

Article XXXIII.—'Mr. J. C. Preller proposes that Article XXXIII. be read, together with concluding article signed by the Triumvirate.

'Mr. Spies: When I see the obligation of the Triumvirate, namely, that it pledges itself that the Volksraad would accept this Convention, it must have been done under pressure. The people would never have submitted to it. They would have fought to the last man. I will never voluntarily consent to the adoption of this Convention. If we reject, bombs and cannon will play amongst us. I hope that some means may be devised to get us out of the difficulty.

'Mr. Van Staden sees no chance of adopting the Convention. They are bound from the first article to the last.

'Mr. Preller proposes that the Raad form itself into a Committee of the whole House to discuss the several terms of the Convention.

'Mr. Otto concurs with last speaker.

'Mr. V. Joubert says: A way must now be found to get through the Convention. In duty to my constituents, I must speak of the Convention as a whole. I must now speak of Great Britain's treatment of us. I begin with the Sand River Convention of 1852, and ask, What do treaties mean? what do they really mean? They signify friendly relations between different nationalities. The Convention of Sand River has been violated at least twelve times a year. It was at last broken by an unjust annexation. If it had not been broken, this present Convention would not be here. This brought us to Laing's Nek. Then a treaty of peace was made, when and where it was provided that limitations of boundary lines] should be made by a Royal Commission. Ground has been unlawfully cut off by this Commission from our territory. Was Keate's award lawful? If I say yes, what right had the Royal Commission to act so unjustly towards natives? If unjust, it is unjust to us. Take it which way you will, it is unjust. The Convention is, however, signed. How came it to be signed? It was Wood's object to induce us to disperse and go home. Thus my opinion is that this Convention was obtained by pressure and under influence. I blame not the Triumvirate, but they are not bound by it.

'Mr. Otto proposes to leave the Convention and discuss other matters in the interests of the country. He recommends that their hopes and expectations be placed in the hands of Providence, and look to God as their deliverer.

'Mr. Van der Heven agrees with what Mr. Preller proposed; he is of opinion that the Triumvirate signed the Convention under pressure.

'The discussion on Article XXXIII. becoming more and more animated, Mr. F. Joubert proposed, and Mr. Bodenstein seconded, "That the Raad resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to discuss the Convention before the House in the presence of the Members of the Executive, Heads of Departments, and such private individuals as the Raad may elect, and thereupon report thereof to the Volksraad."

'The Raad then proceeded to elect a Chairman, when Mr. F. Joubert was chosen by a large majority.'

Thereafter the greatest secrecy was maintained as to the proceedings of the Parliament on this Convention; but it is not difficult to draw an inference as to the one subject discussed with closed doors. The only light thrown on the matter was the publication on the 5th October of a telegram sent to Her Majesty's Government by the Triumvirate in the following terms:—

'TO THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE.

'Triumvirate instructed by Volksraad to apprise you that in their opinion the Convention is contrary to the treaty of Sand River in 1852.

'The Convention is, in many respects, an open breach of the peace agreement between Sir E. Wood for Her Majesty, and the Boer leaders, who, trusting that the principles laid down there would be executed, laid down their arms.

'The Volksraad request that Articles II. and XVIII. may be altered. The Suzerain has no right to the conduct of foreign affairs, only the control. Likewise it is agreed as the peace agreement that we should have complete self-government; and as they stand, Articles III., XIII. subfine (?) XXVI., are a breach of that solemn treaty.

'The Suzerain has no right of approval of our laws. The Resident being a foreigner, cannot be a trustee of property belonging to our citizens. It is *infra dignitatem* for the President to be a member of any Commission.

'Although willing to pay our debts, we want proof and vouchers; this is not given now.

'From Article VIII. the word "commandeering" to disappear.

'Article XX.—They who annul grants pay damages.

'Articles XV., XVI., XXVI., and XXVII. superfluous—only calculated to offend.'

What the answer of Lord Kimberley was is matter of history,—promises anew; and the one thing in this story which passes understanding is, that the Boers should have been content to attach any value to a promise of the nature of that given.

The following text translation of the resolution of the Volksraad 'confirming' the Convention is as reported by the British Resident at Pretoria to General Wood:—

'The Volksraad, in its sitting of 25th October, proceeds to close all further discussions about the Convention signed on the 3rd August 1881, between the members of the Royal Commission, as representatives of Her Majesty the Queen of England, and the members of the Triumvirate, as representing the people of the South African Republic. Likely, indeed, might His Honour the Vice-President declare as follows at the opening of the Volksraad: "We cannot flatter ourselves with the hope that the Convention will satisfy you in its various provisions—it has not satisfied ourselves—but we venture to give you this assurance, that we signed it under the conviction that, under the circumstances, sincere love for our Fatherland, and solicitude in the welfare of South Africa, demanded from us not to withhold our signatures from this Convention. We publish in our *Staats Courant*, as verbally as possible, everything that has been uttered, and that has happened between the members of the Royal Commission and the Honourable the Triumvirate and members of the Transvaal Commission, from which you will see that we left nothing undone on our side to obtain those modifications in the Convention which appeared desirable to us. We are, however, convinced that many, if not all, the remarks advanced by us will appear later on to have been well founded, and that the British Government itself will have to propose modifications and changes in the Convention." The Volksraad is not satisfied with this Convention, and considers that the members of the Triumvirate performed a fervent act of love for the Fatherland when they, upon their own responsibility, signed such an unsatisfactory State document. The Volksraad finds itself compelled to ratify it by the same motives which led the Triumvirate to sign. These motives they dare to proclaim to the world, without any reservation, and they may be expressed in two words, "The fear of renewed bloodshed between people who are bound mutually to forbear and respect each other, and the fear of new disunion between the white race in South Africa," which would at the same time undermine the welfare of every State and Colony of South Africa. The Volksraad will again, and still again, give the examples of endurance and patience which the pioneers of the emigrant Boers have, since 1834, always persistently exercised, and what also occurred in Natal and Bloomplats, showing that they preferred a peace-loving settlement to bloodshed thirty years ago. The great blessing of such a peace-loving attitude appeared. The representatives of the English Government, and the representatives of the emigrant Boers of 1852, signed a Convention at Sand River which then made an end of troubles, and became the foundation of our freedom and independence. In 1877, when the unholy annexation tore this Convention in pieces, they pursued the same course; they did not make use of their right to resist by arms, and only took up arms in 1880 after all other measures were exhausted; also then the war was carried out by us in a defensive manner.

'By the peace negotiations, the right of the people to full independent self-government was acknowledged, while to the Suzerain was only conceded the supervision of foreign relations. As to the debts, nothing was said; compensation for losses during the war were confined to losses which occurred in cases not justified by the necessities of the war. In the Convention nearly all this is disregarded, and the representatives of the people were forced to accept conditions which impose a heavy burden upon the people. The Volksraad has, in its consultations, again pressed the chief points against which the members of the Transvaal Commission have opposed themselves. It is incontrovertible that the people, by its representatives, did at the peace negotiations give its consent to something quite different. The people had the right to expect that it would not receive less than was there agreed upon with its representatives. Accordingly, the Volksraad imposed upon the Government the duty of bringing the difficulties felt to the notice of the English Government.

'The Volksraad desired the following modifications:—

'(*a*) In place of conduct of foreign relations, supervision thereof.

'(*b*) No interference with the legislation of the country.

'(*c*) The President representative of the Suzerain, nothing more.

'(*d*) The alienation of land in the East and the West to be compensated for by England, which country takes these lands to itself, in order to subsequently determine about them.

'(*e*) Only to pay those debts of the country which can be well and lawfully proved to exist, and for lawful and necessary expenditure of the country.

'(*f*) The compensation for damages during the war to be confined to losses not justified by the necessities of war.

'Thereupon came an answer from the English Government which in the main proves that the Volksraad is in the right; it reads as follows: "The Convention having been signed by the leaders who agreed to the peace conditions, and they having undertaken that the Convention shall be ratified, Her Majesty's Government can entertain no proposals for modifications of the Convention until it is ratified and the practical working thereof tested."

'The English Government acknowledges, indirectly, by this answer that the difficulties raised by the Volksraad are neither fictitious nor unfounded, inasmuch as it desires from us the concession that we, the Volksraad, shall submit it to a practical test. The Volksraad again signified that it was dissatisfied with the answer received, that in any case it was inapplicable to the financial position of the difficulties raised, inasmuch as they could never be a matter of practical test. The last answer of the English Government was that it was unwilling to make further concessions. It was as follows: "The Volksraad's resolution of 15th October having been transmitted to Lord Kimberley, I have received instructions to direct you to repeat to the Triumvirate that Her Majesty's Government cannot take into consideration any proposals for modification of the Convention until the same has been ratified, and the necessity for further concession proved by experience." Therefore is it that the Volksraad hereby unanimously resolves not to go into further discussion upon the Convention, and maintaining the objections to the Convention as made before the Royal Commission or stated in the Volksraad, and for the purpose of showing to everybody that the love of peace and unity inspires it for so long, and provisionally submitting the articles of the Convention to a practical test, hereby complying with the request of the English Government contained in the telegram of 13th October 1881, proceeds to ratify the Convention of the 3rd August 1881. Signed as above set forth, for the carrying out of which the members of the Volksraad all sign this resolution one by one, and commission the Chairman and Secretary to notify it to all illustrious Governments.'

Signed by Chairman, C. H. Bodenstein, and thirty-five Members, being entire number present.

This act of the Volksraad confirms the peace negotiations; therefore the narrative of the struggle of the Boers for independence necessarily terminates.

The Earl of Kimberley refusing to discuss the contentions of the Volksraad or to enter into the merits of the question at all, proclaims as the mouthpiece of Her Majesty's Government, that until 'the necessity for further concession has been proved by experience,' nothing more can be done by that Government to give to the Boers that measure of justice which we have been proclaiming lately from the house-tops we desired and intended to give them. What 'necessity' is the necessity for further concession? Is it to be a necessity instituted again by Boer success in the field over British forces? Is there any spark of hope that a less conclusive argument will weigh with England's statesmen so as to induce them to re-open the Transvaal question in a year's time, or in ten year's time? From what quarter comes the high esteem in which the Government of England was recently said to be held for her magnanimity and self-sacrificing generosity to the Boers of the Transvaal? Are the recipients of this favour grateful? Have they cause to be grateful? Read the Convention, and see how graciously there has been conferred on them a measure of power and freedom of self-government inferior, if not equal to that enjoyed by municipal corporations in England. Is that the privilege the Boers fought for? Read their resolutions, their utterances in discussing our gift to them, and say whether they are grateful, or if the justice of justice-loving England (as they were prepared to style our country a few months since) has not turned to ashes in their hands and bitter gall in their mouths. Does the Liberal or the Conservative party reverence the Transvaal settlement?—these affairs are always called settlements. Where are the voices now which a short time ago applauded the invincible desire of the Gladstone Cabinet to make reparation to the Boers for the misdeeds of England? They are as dumb as stone in South Africa, whatever may be their volume elsewhere.

This settlement presumably is the outcome of a policy of thrift, the policy which has for its popular cry, 'We will lessen the burdens of the people.' The position at the present moment is this: If we kept troops in readiness to force the Boers to respect the Convention for, at all events, some little time from the date of its ratification, then the policy of thrift would be upset; but when we withdraw, and abandon the Transvaal to the Boers and the British Resident, for the one to break and the other to wink at the breach of the treaty we have exacted from them, then the hollowness of the settlement is demonstrated. One of the two things we should have to do, for there can be no mistaking, in the face of the resolution of the Volksraad, what will be the policy of the Boers. They clearly say that England has taken an undue advantage of them. If they wait *their* opportunity, and avail themselves of it on the first occasion, who will blame them?

If the matter of a just and equitable settlement had been left in the hands of the Royal Commission, ostensibly and assuredly appointed for such a duty, then it would be comprehensible that the English Government would reply to the demurrers of the Boers, 'You have accepted our arbitrator, and you must now abide by his decision.' In that case also the conditional promise of further 'concessions' in proof of further need might have a certain value attached to it. Considering, however, that the Royal Commission had its verdict dictated to it by the Cabinet, and the verdict of the Cabinet was dictated by political exigency, the word *nil* justly represents the value of that promise. Looking at it in its most favourable light, it is a means of burking the true issue. When a time comes at which the Transvaal Boers can fairly claim to receive the benefits of that promise, and point to a necessity which justifies the grant, there may be reigning a king who knows not Joseph, nor is content to abide by the acts and promises of his predecessor on the throne, since his predecessor set him the example of repudiation.

If the annexation of the Transvaal by the British is to go down to future ages as 'one of the highest-handed acts recorded in history,' whatever may be the result of the present settlement of the country, the manner of that settlement will be illustrious only as an example of political shuffling and injustice, worked under the cloak of virtue. They asked for bread; we promised them bread for the tenth time, and for the tenth time we have given them a stone.

POSTSCRIPT.

Since the MS. of the foregoing work was placed in the hands of the publishers, there died in the Cape Colony the former President of the Transvaal, Thomas F. Burgers, and for some time it was thought that whatever special knowledge he had of the events connected with the annexation of the Transvaal by the British he had allowed to die with him. Such now proves not to be the case. With a full knowledge that nature was shortly to issue her last summons to him, Mr. Burgers wrote the letter which is appended, and which has just come to light through the instrumentality of Mr. Philip Watermeyer, one of the Parliamentary representatives of the Cape Colony, who sent it to the *Volksblad* newspaper for publication. It forms a most important chapter in the history of the Transvaal, and seeing the circumstances under which it was indited, will probably be accepted by the most sceptical mind as the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so far as Mr. Burgers knew it. In a somewhat singular manner it confirms the impressions of my mind recorded in this volume of the act of annexation. Not for that reason, but because no history of the annexation would be complete without it, it is reproduced in this book. Unfortunately the editor of the *Volksblad* has thought fit, probably in the interest of the Dutch party, to suppress one expression 'containing no fact, but somewhat harshly qualifying an individual whose conduct is described.' The ellipsis is denoted by asterisks, and there is no doubt as to the person of whom the dying man though fit to use a harsh expression.

The letter is in the following words:—

'Not in self-defence, but to serve the truth, I commit to paper such facts as may aid the cause to which I have dedicated my life, and from which private circumstances have compelled me to retire for some time. Having neither my notes nor the original documents at my command, I must rely upon my memory, and cannot vouch for the accuracy of every detail nor for dates. The matter *in toto* will, however, be fully reliable, as I abstain from everything doubtful. The files of the *Volksstem* and *Staats Courant*, as well as all matters of public notoriety, will fill up what I pass in silence. During my long and severe illness in 1874, the two elements which operated so powerfully in Transvaal affairs, and which are so difficult to understand by the outer world, viz. the faction of unprincipled fortune-hunters, rascals, and runaways on the one hand, and the faction of the extreme orthodox party in a certain branch of the Dutch Reformed Church on the other, began to co-operate against the Government of the Republic and me personally. The Volksraad and the people were, however, not to be swayed by these parties as long as they felt my presence, and in the session of Volksraad of that year I was empowered to carry out my plans for the development of the country by opening up a direct communication for it, free from the trammels of British ports and influence, with the world. Ill as I was, and contrary to the advice of my medical men, I proceeded to Europe in the beginning of 1875 to carry out my project, and no sooner was my back turned on the Transvaal than the conspiring elements began to act. The new coat-of-arms and flag (this modelled after that of the old Voortrekkers), adopted in the Raad by an almost unanimous vote, were abolished. The laws for a free and secular education were tampered with, and my resistance to a reckless inspection and disposal of Government lands still occupied by natives was openly defied. The Raad, filled up to a large extent with men of ill repute, but who, under the cloak of progress and favour to the

Government view, obtained their seats, was too weak to cope with the skill of the conspirators, and granted leave to the Acting President to carry out measures diametrically opposed to my policy. Native lands were inspected and given out to a few speculators who held large numbers of claims to lands which were destined for the citizens, and so a war was prepared for me on my return from Europe which I could not avert.

'My instructions for making a friendly alliance with the Amazwazi were carried out in a spirit and manner which realized only a hollow and false friendship. The passing of a bond on 500 Government farms, as security for the loan in Holland, was purposely delayed till after my return, and was then only sent with the news of war having actually broken out. How this acted upon the floating of our debentures is needless to say. At the commencement of the Secocoeni war it became apparent to me that the acts of the Opposition (or conspirators) were beginning to bear ripe fruit. The Boers were beginning to waver in their fidelity, and the magistrates (creatures of the people) were aiding in making the expedition a failure. The scum of the people were mostly called out, and in many cases foreigners; while the real Boers, the men mostly interested in the country, were favoured by being passed by in the commandeering. The leaders of the people, P. Kruger, Joubert, and others, whom I requested to stand as candidates for the post of Commandant, flatly refused to come forward; and the Executive, not heeding my counsels, insisted upon my going in person to the commando. How different elements here combined against me; how the motley army, constantly stirred up to mutiny. at last openly deserted me, etc., are matters of history. It was not here, however, where the greatest mischief was done. At home, in the capital, in the town, the spirit of evil was busy, and on my return from the expedition I was betrayed and deserted. By the aid of the Raad, however, which met in extraordinary session in the spring of 1876, the evil was arrested, and a plan arranged to carry on the war to a successful issue by means of a volunteer corps. But now stepped in openly another element which formerly acted in secret, viz., British interference, which got a strong support from the Boers themselves and one of their chief leaders, P. Kruger, who had betrayed me, and contrived to split up the Boers into two great parties by accepting the candidature of President, after having induced me to accept it and having promised his as well as his party's support, and this during my absence on the south-west boundary to settle some matters with the natives.

'No sooner did Shepstone, whose design was checked by the successful course of operations against Secocoeni, perceive that the old Pretorius party, now under me, and the Kruger party, under Kruger, were again divided and in opposition, than he at once decided to avail himself of the chance offered, and he came to Pretoria. There he found matters even more favourable to his plans than he had expected, for apart from the divided state of the people[1] . . . somehow in favour of British, Shepstone found an easy prey in a people on which the demoralizing influence of faction and party spirit had been exercised with great success. The Boers following Kruger considered themselves absolved from their obligations to the State under my rule, while the Boers adhering to me did not care to support a State of which Kruger was to become the chief, and so both parties not only refused to pay their war taxes, but also the ordinary nominal tax on land and other taxes. This soon had its effect, and when Shepstone came to Pretoria the Government was already unable to meet any of its money obligations. The men of the forts fighting for the country could neither get their pay nor their supplies, officials (got) no salary, post contractors no money. The £22,500 borrowed by me and the other members of the Executive on our personal security was spent; my private estate was mortgaged to the full, and by the end of January 1877 the exchequer was empty. The Cape Commercial Bank, seeing that the people would neither fight nor pay taxes, and fearing to lose money lent to the State, aided the designs of the English Government. At the same time the clerical faction mentioned above was active in seducing the people. Slips were printed and distributed; every one was roused in the name of God and religion to abandon the Liberal President. Faint-hearted friends were induced to sit quiet, while a constant cross-fire of lies was kept up, and the pulpit was degraded into a political catapult. So stood matters when Shepstone arrived in January 1877. I foresaw the dangers which would accrue from this state of things for the Republic, and in order to upset Shepstone's design at one blow by uniting all parties, I proposed to Kruger that he and I both should withdraw from the candidature for the Presidency, promising at the same time that I would exert my utmost to get in a man like Strockenstrom, and to assist him with all my might. This Paul Kruger flatly refused to do, saying that I might withdraw, but that he would not. Fruitlessly did I press him by showing how our danger lay in our want of unity, how the English Government would have cause to step in on the ground of humanity to avert a civil war, to prevent a general rising of the natives, etc. He would not hear of retiring. Knowing that when I withdrew and left the field all to Kruger my party would not be satisfied, and still less the English Government, I decided to stand the contest, fully resolved to stick to the Republic whoever became President, and to save it from British rule, and I advised my party accordingly. Kruger, in spite of his having betrayed me, I treated as a friend for the country's sake. On the eve of Shepstone's arrival in Pretoria, I called the Executive (Kruger, Joubert, and Holtzhousen,[1] with the Attorney-General, Jorissen) to my house, in order to arrange upon a plan for dealing with Shepstone, and it was arranged on my proposal that not a single one of us should ever interview Shepstone privately or without at least one other of the Government members with us. It was also arranged that we should do nothing without the consent of the Volksraad, etc. But what was my surprise when the second day after one member of the Government, Swart, went to meet Shepstone privately before he even arrived at Pretoria, and had a long interview with him on Erasmus's farm; when Paul Kruger, whom I took with me when I went to meet Shepstone first, only remained a few minutes, and then left me all alone with Sir Theophilus, thus compelling me to retire sooner than politeness allowed; and when afterwards I learned that other members of Government, as well as several high officials, and influential farmers, went repeatedly singly to call on Shepstone. This proved to me that but few, if any, had a faint idea of the danger the State was in, and I determined to trust no more to any one, but to face the danger single-handed. The meeting of the Executive (with) Shepstone, the appointment of a Commission from both sides to inquire into the alleged grievances of the English Government, such as slavery, etc., I foresaw, were only by-play, whereas the real thing was to be faced in a different way. Hence I met Shepstone alone in my house, and opened up the subject of his mission. With a candour that astonished me, he avowed that his purpose was to annex the country, as he had sufficient grounds for it, unless I could so alter matters as to satisfy his Government. My plan of a new constitution modelled after that of America, of a standing police force of 200 mounted men, was then proposed. He promised that he would give me time to call the Volksraad together, and to abandon his design if the Volksraad would adopt these measures, and the country be willing to submit to them and to carry them out.

---

[1] A few words, probably illegible in the original, have been left out in the copy.

---

[1] Mr. Burgers would appear to have inadvertently omitted the name of Mr. Swart, who, if we are not mistaken, had as State Secretary a seat in the Executive.

'The Raad was called, and in the meantime the constitution drafted, prepared, and then accepted by the Executive. In the opening speech of the Raad which was already in print, I used the strongest language I could conceive to impress upon the representatives of the people the necessity of adopting the means of reform. During the night previous to the opening of the Raad I was roused from my bed by Mr. Bodenstein, the Chairman of the Raad, to whom I had, agreeable to custom, sent a printed copy of the opening speech. He was accompanied by one or two members of the Raad, the State Attorney, and some officials. They told me that the speech was too strong, that it would create a disturbance and cause needless uproar, that things were not so bad, etc., and finally prevailed upon me to alter or omit two or three paragraphs in the speech. This I ought never to have done. The consequence was, that when the new measures were brought before the Raad, this body, almost without any discussion, rejected them *in toto*, in spite of my passionate appeals. I then told them plainly that the Republic would be lost unless they were prepared to meet me in this, and warned them of the consequences, but in vain. The fate of Cassandra befell me. No one would believe, or could believe, what I foretold them, and a great deal of valuable time was spent in idle talk. At last, when members began to see that there was some danger, the enemies having commenced to talk boldly, a Committee out of the Raad was appointed to confer with me about means of saving the Republic. In that Committee two members of the Raad were placed, of whom I knew that neither had paid either war tax or other taxes, and that one at least had dissuaded his constituents and other people from paying. I openly declared that I would not sit in Committee with traitors to their country, and stated the case and my reasons fully. To my astonishment, the Raad took these members under their protection, and made all kinds of excuses for their defaulting. About this time the Chairman, Mr. Bodenstein, and some other members went to Shepstone, and from him they heard what they would not believe from me, that as the Raad had refused my plans of reform, he would be obliged to annex the country. This, of course, gave them an awful shock; and the Raad met in secret or private sitting, at which it was resolved to censure me for having known the danger and kept it secret from the Raad.

'All the members of the Government excused themselves some way or other. At last I rose, and asked whether it was a unanimous vote of censure. "Yes!" was the reply. I then felt as if I had a lot of demons before me, and in bitterness of soul [I said] nothing more than this: "Then, Mr. Chairman, I have no more words for you and the Raad," and sat down, fully resolved to resign that very day. A dead silence reigned for a considerable time, broken at last by a member, Mr. Munnick, whose conscience seemed to have been the first to awaken, and who wished to hear more from me. Being pressed, I once more conquered self, and began asking the members whether they remembered going to me at night; whether they or three-fourths of them remembered hearing from me in my house all that Shepstone told them long afterwards, etc. This stunned them, and I could perceive a change. A feeling of intense shame came over them, and the Boer members particularly implored me not to mind the episode, but to stand by them, promising that they would take the measures approved by me in hand, and, contrary to the rules of the House, reconsider the proposals. This opened up a new course, and let in a ray of hope, and I felt assured that, having seen the danger, the Raad would be persuaded by me to follow my advice. I threw all my soul into the matter again. The Raad resolved to ascertain officially from Shepstone what his intentions were, and on receiving his reply, which fully confirmed the statement made as regards his purpose to annex the country, the Legislature, considering this as an ultimatum, appeared fully to realize the position of affairs and earnestly began to take the new measures in hand. For days every article was wrenched from the Opposition, till half the constitution was adopted. But while this stronghold was being erected, others were undermined, and during these long discussions the traitors had time to demoralize the people by discord still more. Paul Kruger was doing his utmost to make the Boers believe that I was aiming at becoming a Dictator, and that the new constitution was a means of self-aggrandisement proposed by me, and intended to be forced from the people now they were in danger. The English faction in and out of the House backed Kruger, and made the people believe it would be far better to be under the rule of Great Britain, than under that of a Dictator, as I was aiming to be, etc. This was but too successful. The Raad began to flag in its zeal, and only adopted half the measures proposed. Plans made by the Boers to mortgage their farms, and raise money to help the State, while the taxes were coming in slowly, as well as a solemn promise made to me by Pretorius that I would have £30,000 within a week to carry on the Government (made, as he said in the name of forty burghers of the State, who had decided to raise the money), were abandoned, and I never saw nor heard of either Pretorius and his forty Boers nor of the money ever since. Constantly worried by calls for payment, while we had no shilling in the Treasury, harassed and pressed by the English party with memorials in favour of confederation or annexation, asked for payment by the Boers for losses sustained in the war while they refused to pay up their taxes, driven almost to despair by betrayal and corruption on all sides, ruined in my private estate as well as in health, I at last made a final attempt by boldly proclaiming the new constitution as far as it was adopted, and by forming the new Cabinet. But here also I met with insurmountable obstacles. Joubert refused to accept, even for a time, the office of Secretary for Native Affairs. Struben also refused, and so did one or two others, while those who would accept were objected to, on the ground that they were new-comers. Seeing my last attempt fail, the British Commissioner, having a handful of names fairly or foully obtained in favour of annexation, thought his time had come to act. The Volksraad had gone away, having done nothing but harm. The members of the Executive had gone home, as if all were safe, and I sat with a half new Cabinet and part of an old one, half discharged. Yet I made one attempt more, and drafted a letter to Shepstone, intimating that I would oppose the annexation by force of arms, etc., and showing this to two members of the Executive. The response to my appeal, however, was so weak (one of them being in league with the English), that I had to abandon the project, and try to prepare for the worst. When, therefore, Shepstone's announcement came, that he could wait no longer, that he had given us time enough to reform, and that he must issue his proclamation, I could do no more than advise a protest and an appeal to foreign Powers. This having been agreed to by my Government, I met Shepstone in presence of the Executive, and what could be saved for the country, such as its language, its legislature, the position of its officials, etc., was arranged. Before issuing his proclamation, Shepstone desired to see copies of both mine and the Government protest. This, I promised, on condition he showed me his proclamation before publication, to which he agreed. To one clause I greatly objected, and protested, namely, the threat of confiscation of property for disobeying the proclamation. I pointed out that this was barbarous, and would be punishing a man's innocent family for his actions. The clause was omitted. This is the origin of the lie that I helped Shepstone in drawing up his proclamation. In justice to Shepstone I must say that I would not consider an officer of my Government to have acted faithfully if he had not done what Shepstone did, and if the act was wrong (which undoubtedly it was), not he but his Government is to blame for it.

'After the annexation I made up my mind to retire into private life, and to live on my farm. Shepstone was so kind as to offer me an ox-wagon to take my family and few remaining things to the place, which was nothing more than a waste piece of ground, far away from any living soul, with no house and no tree on it. When, however, Shepstone heard of this, he said that such a thing was monstrous, and a cruelty to my wife and children. He at the same time promised that he would secure me, from the Government, an allowance of £1000 per year as a recoup for loss of office, and money lost in the war, etc. After consulting my friends, we decided to return to the colony. My furniture and movables were sold, and my most pressing debts paid. Leaving Pretoria, I found that I had nothing more in the world than four horses and £450 in cash. The old Government wagon was given to me to leave. Against this I left a debt of over £26,000, £23,000 of which were money raised to pay volunteers, and the rest caused by expenses on the expedition and otherwise. The £23,000 were paid off by Government, and the rest, about £3000, I remained responsible for. Arriving in May 1877 in Capetown, I lived as economically as I could on the remnants of my property. This, however, was soon spent, and in March 1878 I was obliged to leave Capetown, having consumed my all and being pressed for liabilities. By the aid of a few friends

I obtained means to return to the Transvaal, nothing having ever been heard of Shepstone's promise. On our way to the Transvaal my wife got ill, and then the child. I saw that to go further was impossible, and accepted an offer of a friend to go and live at an out-station of his sheep-farm, where he had at least the shelter of a small house, and a plot of ground to cultivate. Here I lost the sight of one eye, and my frail health also gave way under the severe manual labour I was obliged to perform. I was laid on a sick-bed for months, my old complaint having returned. During my stay at this place I received a letter from my friend, Mr. Watermeyer, who had interested himself on my behalf, and had brought my case to the notice of Sir Bartle Frere, that the Governor wanted to see me, and that I could draw on him (Mr. W.) for the funds required for the journey. In July 1878, the Governor informed me that the English authorities would consent to my drawing an allowance from the Transvaal Government in consideration of services done and losses sustained for the country until such time as I should have other means of subsistence. On my referring to the promise made by Shepstone, I was told that he (S.) had [no] authority to make such promises, and that this allowance was merely to recompense me for losses. Degrading as it was, and hurtful to my feelings, circumstances forced me to accept this, the more as it was but my own what I was receiving. When I left the colony I had upwards of £2300 which I could call my own, a fine and comfortable residence, and a good and useful position. On my return to the colony I was well-nigh a beggar, with broken health, and the bar as well as the pulpit closed to me. This will show the utter groundlessness of the imputation that I betrayed the Republic, and received remuneration for it from the British Government. I never did, and never shall, accept anything from that quarter, as I have always [protested], and shall continue to protest, against the act of annexation as unjust and cruel.

'But why not have defended myself against the false accusations of my enemies? This question was repeatedly asked by my friend and foe, without any one having the faintest idea of the *sacred* reasons (and they are sacred to me) which closed my mouth and stayed my pen. I will not express any opinion on the false sense of right which allows any accusation, and throws the *onus probandi* on the accused, so that any one can stain another's character, and the slandered is obliged to clear himself, as such a thing, if tolerated, would bring a miserable state of affairs; nor is it necessary for me to point out the unfairness to demand from me to stand upon self-defence and point to years of self-sacrifice and devotion to a cause now as dear to me as ever. I pass also in silence the fact that it is and ought to be beneath the dignity of any public man to waste his time in satisfying jealous opponents, and accusers, and faint-hearted friends, with self-justification. Whether rightly or wrongly, I look down with contempt on calumny, and with scorn on false accusers. No man has any occasion to defend himself in such a case, least of all the innocent and falsely accused. More than pride, more than a sense of dignity, more than contempt for the culumniator weighed with me the interests of the country I served with all my power, and the devotion of a true patriot.

'Had I not endured in silence, had I not borne patiently all the vile accusations, but out of selfishness or fear told the plain truth of the case, the Transvaal would never have the consideration it has now received from Great Britain. However unjust the annexation was, my self-justification would have exposed the Boers to such an extent, and the state of the country in such a way, that it would have been deprived both of the sympathy of the world and the consideration of the English politicians, for the simple reason that the Boers are a most peculiar people, and their circumstances not easily understood. It is notorious how persistently the lie about slavery in the Transvaal is promulgated, and how hopeless the case has hitherto proved to divert the English mind from such ideas. The reason of this is in some measure to be ascribed to the fact that throughout all the years of their troubles, the Boers had not a single friend able and willing to place the real facts of the case before the world.

'The time has now come, however, that the truth should be known, and as Transvaal affairs are daily being better understood, and the Boers themselves have to a great extent, through their valour, blotted out the imputations, to some extent justly cast upon them before, there can be no danger to them in showing to the world a true picture of affairs as they then were.

'More than this, it becomes now a matter of duty to let the Boers themselves know the truth, so that they may know their true friends and real enemies, lest they be again entrapped into difficulties by factions, whose only salvation lies in loosening the bond between the Boers and their friends, and in destroying all confidence in human worth and fidelity. Miscreants invariably seek their safety in fastening their crimes upon others, and the very men who were at the bottom of all the mischief, and who ruined the Republic, were the first to seek a scapegoat. And who more eligible for that office than the man on whom the people relied implicitly, and from whom the people had reason to expect good faith to the end? What indeed could be more simple, what would explain the smooth course of the annexation act more readily to the outer world, than the fact that the President had played into the hands of the English, betrayed and sold the country? Tell the world he is a traitor, he draws a pension as his reward for it, and everything is explained. Besides this, another end would be gained. If Republicans, even Presidents, betray their countrymen, who have been elected for their supposed honour and integrity, and in whom the electors have placed so much confidence as to place them in the highest position, then it is apparent how rotten the Republic cause is. Thus three ends were expected to be gained: the guilty would escape observation, confidence in their leaders would be destroyed among the Boers, and they themselves thereby weakened and the Republican cause would receive a severe blow. By these means the greater end would be obtained, viz., the superiority of Great Britain in South Africa. Marvellous as it may appear, several members of the Volksraad were averse to a Republican form of Government. And this was not the case only with those who belonged to the English party. A day or two before the opening of the last Volksraad, an influential member, Mr. De Vries (a Dutch Jew by birth), told me openly that he was in favour of annexation, for he hated a Republic. Whoever, therefore, supposes that all this conspiracy and all this mischief was merely for the [furtherance] of private interests, or occasioned by a fear of disorder, etc., would greatly underrate the motives at work. The principal motives of the accomplices of the English Government were in full harmony with those of that Government itself. It has been continually paraded before the world that it was in the interest of the Transvaal, and South Africa in general, and out of Christian charity to the poor oppressed heathen, that the annexation was resorted to by the British Government.

'It is a pity that such kindness always comes when it is not wanted. When, six or eight years before, the Transvaal was in a state of anarchy and worse off than in 1877, no such interest and charity was shown. No, it was not the poverty or misery of the Boers which brought the blessings of the English flag, nor was it the wealth of the gold and diamond mines which attracted English avarice, nor the pity toward the poor Kaffirs, who, like Cetewayo and Secocoeni, have but poor consolation from that pity. It was English supremacy in South Africa, coupled with the knowledge that the Transvaal is the key to Central South Africa, on which the eyes of the far-seeing are fixed as a new field of commerce. That the possession of this key to a new world would cost so much and be so difficult to obtain and to keep was not anticipated, and it certainly is one of the most striking instances of retribution in history, that such an inherently weak people as the Boers should have taught the strong and powerful such lessons as that of Laing's Nek and Majuba. In one respect, and in one only, can the friends of liberty reconcile themselves to, and excuse such an act as the destruction of a small, free, and inoffensive Republic, viz., that such acts invariably [bring] the very opposite results [of] those intended. South Africa has gained more from this, and has made a larger step forward in the march of freedom than most people can perceive.'

Added to this document is a copy of the despatch by which Mr. Burgers was informed of the grant of an allowance, and of the conditions on which he would receive it:—

'Government House, Pretoria, Transvaal, *August* 26, 1878.

'Sir,—I have the honour to inform you that the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies has, after full consideration of the subject, approved of the grant of an allowance to you from Transvaal funds, at the rate of £500 per annum.

'2. He has, however, thought fit to impose the conditions that you do not reside in or near the Transvaal without the express permission of the Officer administering the Government, and that the allowance is payable only while you are otherwise without sufficient means of subsistence.

'3. The Secretary of State also wishes it to be clearly understood that the allowance may be withdrawn in the event of your declining an office which may be offered to you, and which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, you may reasonably be called upon to accept.

'4. As you are aware, the spirit of this decision has already been acted upon under the authority of His Excellency the High Commissioner, and that you have received under that authority the allowance herein named from the 12th April 1877.

'5. The arrangements made by His Excellency for the regular payment to you of this allowance at Capetown will be continued so long as it may be agreeable and convenient to you.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant,

'T. Shepstone, Administrator.

'Thomas F. Burgers, Esq., etc., Cape Colony.'

THE END.

PRINTED BY
MORRISON AND GIBB, LIMITED, EDINBURGH.

The Wild Life of Scotland.

By J. H. CRAWFORD, F.L.S. Illustrations by JOHN WILLIAMSON. Handsomely bound. Large crown 8vo, 8s. 6d. net.

Spring Bird Life—Early Burn Fishing—On the Moor—Gulls and Divers—The North Sea—Marine Mammals and Predatory Fishes—Baits and Sea Fishing—Shetland—Loch Leven and Loch Tay—By the Loch-side—The Stag—Among the Border Streams—Feathered Game—Vermin—Autumn Bird Life—Wild Fowl in an Estuary—Winter.

The Times says: "Mr. Crawford's skill in depicting various phases of nature and animal life ought to send his readers forth into the country with eyes ready to note and appreciate many things to which they have, perhaps, hitherto been totally blind. To read papers like 'Gulls and Divers' or 'The North Sea' on a July day in London is almost the next best thing to being in reality within sound of the waves."

The Daily Mail says: "The book is thoroughly enjoyable and exhilarating. Its contents have a wide range of interest. . . . Something worth one's attentive reading is to be found on every page."

The Publisher's Circular says: "The entire contents reach a high level of merit, and those observantly fond of Nature will derive much pleasure from its pages."

The Glasgow Herald says: "This book partakes of the nature of an 'edition de luxe,' and it is one in which the naturalist may well delight, and add to the art corner of his library."

Rod and Gun says: "The illustrations, by Mr. John Williamson, are a graceful addition to this charming volume, which will be duly appreciated, we doubt not, by all good sportsmen."

The Globe says: "This is the very book for the holiday-maker who cares for nature."

Black and White says: "The holiday-maker in Scotland could have no more entertaining volume."

Nature says: "This collection of papers, which represent the result of his (Mr. Crawford's) observations and meditations, are typical of the forms of life in the woods and waters of Scotland; they are pleasantly written and attractively illustrated, and will interest all country naturalists."

The Scotsman says: "To naturalists and sportsmen, and to all who love and study the ways of birds and fish and four-footed beasts in their own haunts, Mr. Crawford's 'Wild Life of Scotland' will be a most welcome find. . . . Few have written upon these favourite subjects with greater charm and knowledge."

The Aberdeen Free Press says: "All who love Nature in her outward aspects, who like to recall the hours spent on the open moor or in the woodlands, by the river or seashore, and the acquaintance thus made with beast, bird, and flowers, will find interesting and delightful reading in Mr. Crawford's pages."

The Saturday Review says: "'Wild Life of Scotland' is one of those delightful books which one places on the shelf with the Colquhouns and the St. Johns, nor is it possible to give it higher praise. . . . But we might go on indefinitely with our comments on a book which is a wellspring of enjoyment and a mine of information."

Indifference in Matters of Religion.

By the ABBÉ F. DE LAMENNAIS. Translated from the French, with a Preface by LORD STANLEY of Alderley. Demy 8vo, 12s.

The National Observer says: "This well-executed translation deserves to be read."

The Court of England under George IV.

Founded on a Diary interspersed with Letters written by Queen Caroline and various other Distinguished Persons. Two vols. demy 8vo, 25s.

The Daily Telegraph says: "There is all the usual Court and Society scandal, not ill-naturedly reproduced, and a description of travel in Switzerland and of life in Italy. Moreover, there are interpolated in the narrative letters from the unhappy Princess Caroline herself, in which her vivacity, her spite, and her terrible loneliness are vividly depicted."

National Observer says: "Intensely interesting and never dull."

The Selected Poems of John Stuart Blackie.

With a Portrait after the Painting by J. H. LORIMER, A.R.S.A. Edited, with an appreciation, by his Nephew, ARCHIBALD STODART WALKER. Crown 8vo, 5s.

The Daily News says: "This book will abide, or should abide, for the sake of its introduction."

Cheer, Boys, Cheer!

Memories of Men and Music. Portrait. By HENRY RUSSELL. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

The Daily Chronicle says: "There is ample store of anecdotes in this cheap and handsome volume."

A Manual of Italian Literature.

By F. H. CLIFFE. Crown 8vo, 6s. [*Just out.*

The Glasgow Herald says: "Judged as a whole the book is a useful one. . . . The merits of the volume are by no means inconsiderable."

The Scotsman says: "Mr. Cliffe approves himself a thoughtful and well-informed guide . . . should give both zest and aid to the study of Italian letters."

LONDON:
JOHN MACQUEEN,
HASTINGS HOUSE, NORFOLK STREET, STRAND.

14 DAY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED

LIBRARY USE
RETURN TO DESK FROM WHICH BORROWED
LOAN DEPT.
THIS BOOK IS DUE BEFORE CLOSING TIME
ON LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW

LIBRARY USE DEC 1 1971 8 5

REC'D LD DEC-1 '71-4 PM 9 3

INTERLIBRARY LOAN
[illegible]
UNIV. OF CALIF. BERK.

LD62A–30m-2,'71
(P2003s10)9412A–A-32

General Library
University of California
Berkeley

JAN 2
10m-7,'33

YC 48113

516857

DT928
C3

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY